



Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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Daily Report

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Al-Qadhdhafi, al-Asad Seek Egypt, Sudan Mediation

PM1703110293 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
14 Mar 93 pp 1, 4

[Muhammad 'Allam report: "Egypt Stresses Seriousness of Its Warning to Sudan; al-Qadhdhafi and al-Asad Mediate Between Two Countries"]

[Excerpt] Cairo—Egyptian sources yesterday said that Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi and President Hafiz al-Asad are making contacts with President Husni Mubarak to stop the deterioration in relations between Egypt and Sudan and avoid any complications as a result of the Sudanese Government's recent decisions, "which are aimed at hitting the Egyptian presence in Sudan."

The sources said that Egypt "stressed that its positions and policies are fixed and do not change, that it cares about the Egyptian and Sudanese peoples' interests and ties, and that it is doing everything to bolster and develop them."

The sources pointed out that the Arab capitals which intervened to prevent further deterioration have been told that Egypt believes that relations between the two countries "are heading for an escalation" and that the Khartoum government's policies "prove that this government is not serious about dialogue." The sources said that since the official protest was submitted to the Sudanese Government last Thursday [11 March] no official contacts have been made by Khartoum. The sources indicated that it has become certain from the investigations conducted with those detained in terrorist cases that "Iran plays a major role in financing and incitement through some Sudanese elements and quarters." They also said that "Cairo is serious about its warning about using Sudanese territory as a foothold for Iran to threaten its stability and terrorize its people by terrorist practices." They added that "Cairo will show no leniency toward those who are hitting the Egyptian people in one of their most important source of livelihood, that is tourism, and those who are behind them." [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs

Egypt-Syria Plan To Solve Deportee Issue Noted

TA1603141693 Jerusalem AL-MANAR in Arabic
15 Mar 93 p 3

[Text] In the wake of Syrian-Egyptian contacts and consultations, agreement was reached on the clauses of a plan for resolving the deportee issue, which is threatening the negotiating process. According to diplomatic circles, this "solution plan" was relayed to the U.S. Administration and to President Bill Clinton before the departure of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin to Washington. The plan calls for the following:

- An Israeli announcement on the eve of the ninth round of negotiations, that 100 deportees will be repatriated to the occupied territories.
- The remaining deportees will be repatriated at the end of June.
- Israel will officially announce a halt to the deportation policy as long as the negotiations continue.

Those circles say that Israel has made implementation of this plan contingent upon a statement by Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] ending all military activity. The same circles add that Israel has expressed its readiness to return some of the old deportees during 'Id al-Fitr. The Israeli authorities have also expressed readiness to have the military appeals committees issue orders for the return of the 100 deportees mentioned in the first clause of the Syrian-Egyptian plan.

Observers believe that Damascus is interested in solving the deportee issue to avoid an embarrassing situation if it attends a complete negotiating round.

'Arafat, Mubarak To Discuss Israeli Gaza Proposals

TA1603160393 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic
14 Mar 93 pp 1, 19

[By special AL-QUDS correspondent]

[Text] Cairo—PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat will leave for Cairo within the next few days to hold very important talks with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak on the new Israeli proposals to relinquish the Gaza Strip and hand it over to the Palestinians. In addition, they will discuss developments in the occupied Arab lands and the violent Israeli practices against Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Sources said that the PLO is trying to obtain new guarantees and assurances on the possibility of achieving progress in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiating track before announcing its agreement to participate in the ninth round, due to be held 20 April, especially as 16 months have passed since the Madrid conference without any tangible progress having been achieved.

In a related development, Muhammad Subayh, secretary of the Palestine National Council, has said that the PLO is awaiting a U.S. response to the demands in the Palestinian memorandum delivered to U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher during his tour of the region and his meeting with members of the Palestinian negotiating delegation, before determining its final stance regarding participation in the ninth round of bilateral talks.

Subayh added that the bases which govern the Palestinian stance at present are implementation of Security

Council Resolution 799 and repatriation of all the Palestinian deportees as well as a final halt by the Israeli authorities in issuing new deportation orders against Palestinians.

'Abd-al-Shafi: Delegation Cannot Prevent Terror

TA1603200093 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew 1900 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] Dr. Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, head of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks, said tonight that his delegation cannot prevent the wave of terror. According to him, 1.5 million Palestinians living under prolonged occupation cannot be asked to be patient until the political process is completed. Dr. 'Abd-al-Shafi is currently addressing the Arab Students Union at Hebrew University on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem. Our correspondent in the territories Amir Hay talked to him.

[begin 'Abd-al-Shafi recording, in Arabic] Naturally, we are very annoyed at this mutual violence. We do not condone the principle of killing the innocent, but this is a continuous cycle of violence. In my view, it is not possible to emerge from this cycle by arming the settlers or the Israelis. The only way to emerge from this cycle is to achieve progress in the negotiating process toward the realization of peace. This is the only condition that can extricate us from the cycle of violence. [end recording]

Aims of Rabin's Visit to Washington Viewed

TA1603184193 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 14 Mar 93 p 11

[Editorial: "Rabin's Visit to Washington and the Media Pressure on the Palestinians"]

[Text] Apparently, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's current visit to Washington aims at putting the final touches to an Israeli-U.S. strategy in the region. This strategy leans toward marginalizing the Palestinian role and ignoring all Palestinian demands, which are basically based on an international legitimacy that the United States itself has helped create.

Perhaps the rhetorical statements and campaigns by various parties that preceded and accompanied the visit indicate the dimensions of the Israeli-U.S. plan. These statements and campaigns include highlighting the possibility of achieving some sort of agreement with Syria at one time and with Jordan at another while exerting immense media pressure on the Palestinian side alone. This pressure includes using the phrase lost opportunities and at other times underestimating Palestinian presence in the anticipated negotiations. All these things indicate the dimensions of the Israeli-U.S. plan in its latest modifications.

Time has taught us that western diplomatic agencies are among the most capable in exploiting words as a means and objective simultaneously. Consequently, the Palestinian side is required and able to weigh the statements

made by this or that party and assess the situation in an objective and concentrated manner thereby determining future steps in a rational way that places the Palestinian people's interests and national aspirations above any consideration.

The statements emanating from the highest levels in fraternal Syria as well as in Jordan affirm that the Israeli-U.S. media campaign of expectations and threats, or warnings to the Palestinians regarding separate Syrian or Jordanian stances was mainly aimed at securing specific Palestinian positions.

The Palestinian problem is the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This conflict will not be finally resolved unless a settlement is reached on this core. Continued Egyptian efforts to resolve the Palestinian problem, despite a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, is a clear indication of an inseparable Arab and Islamic link to the Palestinian cause. Hence, Israel and the United States should deal with this problem with the importance and influence that it deserves.

Presumably, therefore, U.S. contacts with Israel and other countries, including Rabin's visit, will lead to an Israeli-U.S. convergence on the clear concepts of peace, which stress granting the Palestinians their inalienable rights and implementing international legitimacy's resolutions on the Palestinian problem quickly.

PLO's 'Abbas on Peace Talks, Other Issues

JN1503090793 Amman AL-RAY in Arabic 15 Mar 93 p 14

[Interview with PLO Executive Committee member Mahmud 'Abbas, alias Abu-Mazin, by Sa'd al-Silawi in Amman; date not given]

[Excerpts] [Al-Silawi] Your visit to Jordan comes amid critical circumstances for the Palestine question, the deportees, and the peace negotiations. What was the nature of the talks you had with Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir on these issues?

['Abbas] This visit is part of joint Arab action with regard to the five-party meeting which is supposed to be held as soon as possible, in order to coordinate for the ninth round of negotiations and find a solution to the question of deportees. We had reached a solution through the meeting held in Jerusalem between a Palestinian delegation and a U.S. delegation, which produced six points that have not yet been implemented. We adhere to these points and ask the parties concerned to implement them. We consider these points a basis for the Palestinian position, and not implementing them will make Palestinian participation impossible. We have felt, through my visits to Jordan and Cairo and the visit of brother Faruq Qaddumi to Syria, that there is an Arab response to and understanding of the Palestinian position. I believe that the Arab parties will also make efforts to implement these points before the start of the ninth round.

[Al-Silawi] Suppose the Israeli position does not change and the six points are not implemented? Did the Palestinian leadership decide not to go to the talks unless the points were implemented?

[Abbas] It is perfectly understood that the PLO leadership attaches great importance to this issue because it greatly affects the Palestinian situation as a whole, especially if Israel continues to adopt the principle of deporting Palestinians from their territory. Therefore, we insist that deportations end. We also think that Resolution 799 should be implemented and the deportees should return. This is in addition to other points that were agreed on. As I have said, if Israel thinks that it cannot implement these points, then we also think that we cannot take part in the forthcoming round. [passage omitted]

[Al-Silawi] Jordan's position has been acclaimed by the Palestinian people and leadership. Do you expect a similar position by other Arab countries taking part in the peace process?

[Abbas] We are working toward this end. We have heard good news from brother Faruq Qaddumi about the Syrian side. He cited the Syrians as saying that they adhere to the six points. This means we have a common Arab stand. I also heard two basic points from the Egyptians. The first is adherence to the implementation of the six points, and the second is working quickly to hold a five-way meeting, in addition to quick Arab action, particularly Egyptian contacts, with the concerned parties such as Israel and the United States to urge them to overcome this obstacle. [passage omitted]

[Al-Silawi] There are declared meetings between Fatah and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]. Ibrahim Ghawshah, the official spokesman of Hamas, has recently said that Hamas agreed to a Palestinian state. In light of this, how do you envisage the forthcoming meeting and its agenda?

[Abbas] We have held more than one meeting with Hamas. We are ready to have more meetings, but on clear and specific bases. The Hamas people talk about two things. The first has to do with participation in the PLO and the size of this participation. This subject can be discussed. But for them to ask us to abandon the current negotiations, this is something that we cannot allow. We ask them first to join the legitimate institutions and then to declare the position they want. If they secure a majority in favor of their position, then the Palestinians will naturally accept their view. But we reject preconditions and are not willing to discuss them. [passage omitted]

[Al-Silawi] What is your position toward the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York and similar operations?

[Abbas] Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] has previously said that we are against all terrorist acts. We condemn all

forms of these acts, including the state terrorism practiced by the Israelis. Therefore, we oppose and condemn any act, like the bombing of the World Trade Center, which leads to the killing of innocent civilians.

[Al-Silawi] Some people say that anti-Palestinian organs, like the Mosad, are behind the operation. According to your information, do you think there are Israeli hands working to fabricate a new crisis between Arabs, Palestinians, and Islamists one the one hand and the United States on the other?

[Abbas] Anything is possible. We do not have any information, but anything is possible to distract attention from the major issues in the Middle East. It is highly likely that foreign intelligence carried out the operation. We have to wait and see the outcome of investigations.

[Al-Silawi] How do you evaluate the position of the new U.S. Administration following U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit to the region? Is there a positive change that is in the interest of Palestinian legitimate rights and which is different from the previous administration?

[Abbas] What worries me is that the new U.S. Administration, which faces many problems, may turn its priorities to domestic economic issues and neglect international issues. So far, we have not heard from the Americans that they have changed the Middle East policy set by President Bush. However, it is too early to evaluate the policy of new President Clinton, before we see how it will be practiced. We will have to see how this administration works during the negotiations to judge whether it is going to go back on Bush's policy or whether it will adopt a better policy than that of Bush.

[Al-Silawi] Are you personally optimistic about this administration, noting that Christopher chose the Middle East for his first tour after assuming the post of secretary of state?

[Abbas] We have to deal with it whether we are optimistic or pessimistic. The question is about substantial matters more than optimism or pessimism. We are waiting to know the U.S. position precisely in order to judge it. U.S. Secretary of State Christopher's choice of the Middle East for his first visit is a good sign. The U.S. Administration has scored a point by this visit. However, there is a point against it, which is its failure to commit itself to the six points on which agreement was reached. So, it is better to wait.

[Al-Silawi] The United Nations is still effectively outside the peace process despite all the resolutions it adopted as an international establishment?

[Abbas] Regrettably, the Bush administration had bowed to Shamir's condition at the outset of the peace process and excluded the United Nations as well as Europe, other parties, and the PLO itself. But we note that the UN position may improve if the UN secretary general insists on

giving a role to the United Nations. I don't think Rabin will oppose the UN effort as Shamir did.

[Al-Silawi] There will be a meeting of the cordon states in which you will participate. What are the important issues to be presented at this meeting by the Palestinian delegation?

[Abbas] We will present our views on the deportee issue, the negotiations held with Christopher, and our concept of the negotiations in the next stage. As is known, and regardless of the deportee issue, we had almost reached a stalemate in the negotiations; therefore, what we want to discuss is: If we go to the negotiations and if the deportee issue is resolved how will we act together, as Arabs, so that the negotiations will proceed in a better way than the past, and so that we gain something substantial from these negotiations?

[Al-Silawi] There are reports of a possible surprise Israeli withdrawal from Gaza. Are you ready to assume the administration there, and is this possible?

[Abbas] We cannot comment on this because these are mere reports and there is nothing official. I mean it is not an official Israeli Government position. We have not heard from any Arab or international party that it had been informed by the Israeli Government that it will withdraw from the Gaza Strip. If Israel wants to withdraw from the Gaza Strip, let it withdraw, and it is welcome to do so. The Palestinian people will be ready to run their affairs if such withdrawal takes place. We do not oppose such a withdrawal but we do not consider it part of a settlement or a deal, or part of the peace process; we consider it a unilateral action.

[Al-Silawi] What is the story of your visit to Saudi Arabia and your apology to the Saudis for your position on the Gulf war? Have your efforts there failed?

[Abbas] My efforts have not failed. I went to Saudi Arabia to participate in the Fatah Movement anniversary celebrations which are held annually under the auspices of Prince Salman Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the chairman of the popular committees. I went there and I read a written and clear speech on the position which you spoke about on the Gulf war. I am fully convinced of what I said there and of every word I said. If I were asked to repeat these words, I would, and with exactly the same words. This is because we are not ashamed of what we say. We do not consider what I said as shameful. On the contrary, I said what I am convinced about, and which my leadership supports.

The following is exactly what I said in my speech: Your Highness, brothers: The Gulf crisis, which nearly undermined the bases of security and stability in the Middle East, has harmed many of the ties that used to bind the sons of this nation to our people, revolution, and leadership, particularly here in the Gulf region. We do not deny that this region has offered us support, whether with respect to the many Palestinian groups which came to it seeking a living and which found care and love in

these countries, or with respect to our revolution whose first roots flourished on this land. We also do not deny the events and facts the crisis brought about and revealed. It showed that it was important for us to know where we stand so that we would not lose our way or give the enemy the opportunity to exploit our political stands, something our people and revolution were better off without while trying to secure their march and protect their cause. Given that we are a revolution and because the word of a leader should be as forceful as the bullet, we tell our brothers here in Saudi Arabia and in all the Arab Gulf countries that the stands which prevailed over our approach to the Gulf crisis are not ingrained in Palestinian ideology and will never be so at any time, and we never intended from our stands to support aggression or assist injustice. While we apologize for what has happened, acknowledging that what happened is not something to be taken lightly, we hope that this incident, although it is sensitive, important, and serious, should not remain a barrier preventing a meeting among the sons of this nation.

This is what I said. We did nothing we need be ashamed of. We stated what we believed in and what we will repeat in any place. I do not believe my visit to Saudi Arabia was a failure. On the contrary, I was warmly welcomed by the Saudis and the Palestinians alike. I did not hear any criticism from any Palestinian grouping or figure. There was criticism from outsiders, from irresponsible writers to whom I pay no attention. Even the 10 Palestinian factions did not mention anything. Some writers who are not familiar with the Palestinian frame of mind tried to slander me and harm me. But, we do not pay any attention to them. We did something that was approved by the leadership and the Palestinians. The Saudis are satisfied with this, and we view it as a step toward the normalization of Arab relations. This is something in which we are interested, over which we are concerned, and which we will pursue.

[Al-Silawi] Is there some hope of an Arab reconciliation in the wake of your visit?

[Abbas] I was not aware that the roads to the Gulf were closed. They could be open but require some efforts. There are no roads which are completely closed. Things could return to normal in the Arab arena and the Arab atmosphere could be cleared. However, this requires efforts, and not by only one side.

[Al-Silawi] Are you apprehensive about separate settlements between Arab countries and Israel?

[Abbas] No, we do not fear such a thing. However, we should understand that the nature of the various tracks differs in terms of form, content, and complexities. This inevitably will result in one track achieving more progress than the other. However, there is an Arab consensus that the solution should be a comprehensive one and should include all parties.

[Al-Silawi] Let us go back to your visit to the Gulf, your trip to Qatar and Oman before the visit to Saudi Arabia.

How were these visits, and did Qatar actually assist the Palestinians, and was there a Saudi pledge to help the Palestinian people?

[Abbas] The visits to Qatar and Oman were a success according to all criteria. The Qatari Government collected funds from what we call salary deductions and transferred them to the Palestine National Fund. As for Saudi Arabia, I sensed that the brothers there are ready to support the occupied territories and to offer the necessary aid. But time is needed to work out matters.

[Al-Silawi] How do you evaluate the PLO's economic situation, and how is the process of building the infrastructure in the occupied territories proceeding?

[Abbas] Undoubtedly, the depletion of the financial resources which the PLO used to have access to has substantially affected the economic situation and the subsidy which the PLO used to extend to the occupied territories. This is not a secret and we suffer from this situation, but we hope for better times soon. As for the infrastructure, technical staff specializing in various fields and sectors are being prepared and trained so that when the elections are held, when control is attained, and transitional rule begins, the Palestinian organs will be ready to shoulder responsibility.

[Al-Silawi] With the change of U.S. Administration there is hope of a dialogue and resumption of relations with the PLO. Are there contacts on this subject?

[Abbas] We have always been asking the Americans for this, and there are continuous contacts through Arab parties and through our Palestinian delegation, which always demand the resumption of the Palestinian-U.S. dialogue, but the United States continues to insist that the time is not yet ripe for the resumption of the dialogue.

[Al-Silawi] How do you envisage the settlement of the Palestine question?

[Abbas] I don't expect any specific thing, but the settlement I envisage is a two-stage one. The first is a transitional stage during which the Palestinian national authority in the occupied territories will be elected. Later, negotiations will be held on the final solution, which will include all aspects of the problem.

[Al-Silawi] Do you think that representation in the negotiations should be upgraded to the ministerial level?

[Abbas] First, this requires U.S. recognition of the United States resumes dialogue with the PLO. Second, Israel should accept this suggestion. As for the level of the present negotiators, they are good and efficient, and they managed to grasp the negotiations very quickly. They are among the most brilliant Palestinian personalities capable of performing this task.

[Al-Silawi] The 10 Palestinian factions which oppose the PLO's participation in the peace talks recently held a meeting. Is there anything new in their position?

[Abbas] We always urge them to hold dialogue with us on the known bases concerning the peace process. We ask them to join us in order to improve matters and to reach better results but regrettably, some of them have done nothing but hold meetings and issue statements for more than 10 years. Regrettably, their role is marginal and has no effect.

[Al-Silawi] I want to conclude by asking a question about your visit to Moscow. Can there be a greater role for Russia or is it busy with its problems? How do you evaluate relations with Russia?

[Abbas] Undoubtedly, Moscow is still busy with its own affairs. It has internal issues that can keep the officials in Moscow constantly busy. As for the Palestinian-Russian relations, I admit these were not at all normal one year ago or more. In fact, these relations were very bad for a variety of reasons. However, relations began to develop step by step until they reached a satisfactory level to us and to the Russians. Within this context, the Russians play a positive role in the peace process especially now and at this stage. During my recent visit, the Russians showed full understanding of the points relating to the deportees, and agreed with us that this problem should be solved before the peace process resumes. They appreciate the flexible Palestinian position toward the peace process as a whole, but at the same time, they believe that deportations are a dangerous problem that should be resolved. If some irresponsible statements were made against Russia for its role and position, those who made such statements were irresponsible people and unaware of the reality of the Russian position which we know.

Fatah's 'Abd-al-Rahim on U.S., Hamas

PM1603161193 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 14 Mar 93 p 6

[Report on interview with al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, "Fatah Central Committee member and Palestine's ambassador to Jordan," by unidentified correspondent in Amman; date not given]

[Excerpts] Al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, Fatah Central Committee member and Palestine's ambassador to Jordan, has stated that the PLO had hoped that the deportees issue would be resolved before U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher began his tour of the region, in order to focus talks during the tour on the faltering of the peace negotiations as a result of Israeli intransigence. In an exclusive interview with AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 'Abd-al-Rahim said that Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat had requested that the deportees issue be resolved in accordance with Resolution 799. That was mentioned in a message to the U.S. Administration which Hanan 'Ashrawi, spokesman for the Palestinian delegation, delivered two weeks before Christopher's tour began.

He expressed his regret "that this was not achieved, and that the Americans continued to talk about the deal they had concluded with the Israelis and which we rejected

and regarded as a perpetuation of the deportation principle and an attempt to get around the implementation of the Security Council Resolution."

'Abd-al-Rahim pointed out that "Christopher's tour has two important aspects: First, it was the first foreign tour made by the U.S. secretary since assuming his post—which accentuates the degree of interest in the region's issue. Second, in the context of his reaffirmation of the U.S. commitment to the peace process he expressed U.S. willingness to play the role of a full partner. And the PLO has been demanding an effective U.S. role since the launch of the Madrid peace negotiations. As we understand it, this role is for all the parties to respect the authority of the peace process represented in Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the land for peace principle. And a decisive position should be adopted in its capacity as the main sponsor of the peace process vis-a-vis Israeli negotiating positions and practices violating the authority of the peace process, its aims, and its timeframe."

Asked whether Palestinian negotiators would participate in the next round of negotiations if the deportees issue remained unresolved, 'Abd-al-Rahim said that "during its talks with Christopher in Jerusalem the Palestinian delegation secured basic ideas concerning the illegality of the deportation and the commitment not to practice it in the future and to comply with Resolution 799 and other measures concerning human rights in the occupied territories. But the Israelis later backtracked on these ideas after Christopher had informed us of their acceptance of them—which returned us to square one. This is why we do not see ahead of us any factors which prompt us to change our position, which links the resumption of the negotiations with the abolition of the deportation policy and the deportees' return within the framework of measures to respect human rights in the occupied territories." [passage omitted]

On his impressions of the present U.S. Administration 'Abd-al-Rahim said: "The PLO is watching, and perhaps it is too early to pass a final judgment on President Clinton's administration. But there are some indications which concern us, namely the appointment of some people known for their absolute loyalty to Israel,

including people who worked for AIPAC [American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee]. This is why President Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] requested in his message to Christopher, which the Palestinian delegation delivered during the Jerusalem meetings, a reaffirmation of the U.S. position on numerous issues, including the position on Jerusalem and the authority of the peace process and also the fulfillment of the pledges made in the past regarding the resumption of the dialogue with the PLO." [passage omitted]

On the situation between the PLO and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] 'Abd-al-Rahim said that "the brothers in Hamas attended the PLO leadership's meetings in Tunis and were fully briefed on the details of the extensive campaign which the PLO has launched from the outset vis-a-vis the deportees issue, which is regarded as a major national issue which should be above any narrow factional calculations." He added that "any attempt to circumvent the struggle led by the PLO vis-a-vis deportation and human rights issues would harm the deportees' brilliant steadfastness and our people's struggle." [passage omitted]

Asked why dialogue has not begun between the PLO and Hamas in the framework of the follow-up committee which arose from the first Khartoum meeting, 'Abd-al-Rahim said, "PLO doors are still open to any force that adopts struggle to achieve Palestinian aims, regardless of ideological, political, or organizational principles. PLO principles have always urged all forces, including Hamas, to join the PLO ranks. But no one has the right to dictate to our people or try to impose his conditions." [passage omitted]

He added: "The Palestinian leadership's recent meeting decided to send a delegation to put Hamas in the picture about the talks held between our delegation and the U.S. delegation in Jerusalem. The delegation sent by the leadership told the brothers in Hamas all the details and asked them about the reasons for the overt and covert campaign launched against the PLO by some Hamas circles. We told them that what unites us is more than what divides us, so look for points of agreement for the sake of national interests and fear God with regard to your allegations."

Algeria

Reports, False Reports, of Assassinations

Sports Minister Assassinated

LD1603183493 Paris France-Inter Radio Network in French 1300 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Excerpts] There were two fatal attacks in Algeria today. The former higher education minister [Djilali Liabes] was the first to fall. This morning, he was the victim of an attack near Kouba, one of the Islamists' strongholds.

We have just learned that the Algerian sports minister [Abdelkader Khamri] has also been killed. [passage omitted]

Labor Minister Wounded; Sports Minister Killing Denied

LD1603200393 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] We have just learned from sources close to the minister of culture and communication that Mr. Tahar Hamdi, the minister of labor and social affairs, was the victim of an assassination attempt during which he was slightly wounded.

The same source denied the news report disseminated this evening by some foreign media concerning the assassination of a member of the government, that is, Mr. Abdelkader Khamri, the minister of youth and sports. This news report is totally unfounded.

The same source said that the Algerian Government is courageous enough to tell the whole truth however bitter.

HSC Communique on Liabes Assassination

LD160320093 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] In the midst of a series of meetings with parties and associations, the Higher State Council [HSC] received news of the assassination of Mr. Djilali Liabes and held a minute's silence in memory of his pure soul.

The Higher State Council issued the following communique:

The assassination of Mr. Djilali Liabes, lecturer at the University of Algiers, director of the National Institute for Comprehensive Strategic Studies, and former higher education minister; the armed attack on Mr. Hafid Senhadri, senior cadre, member of the National Consultative Council, and director of the office of vocational training; and other assassinations of members of the People's National Army, of the Gendarmerie, of public security, of innocent citizens, and of the nation's cadres, all confirm the dimensions of the criminal and traitorous plan that uses Islam and that is implemented by terrorist groups and by elements they support with money and arms and assist politically and morally, from within and

without. The assassinations reveal the extent of those elements' hatred for Algeria.

That criminal plan targets the Algerian state, people, and nation. It targets their past, present, and future and their national and civilizational values. It is implemented by a treacherous force linked to strategic foreign interests and to hostile quarters lying in wait at all times to take their revenge on our country and to strike at its heart. Those quarters feed off treacherous internal forces that try to climb the ladder of power and to seize it by force, even if that costs the lives of all Algerians.

The Higher State Council is meeting all its national legitimate responsibilities in facing up to this plan and in defending the Algerian state and nation and the Algerian people's faith and national struggle values. The Higher State Council will not hesitate to use all means to achieve that purpose.

While the Algerian people have to understand and recognize the danger they face, political forces have to define their stances, as there is no longer scope for maneuver, free play, bargaining, or sitting on a fence while the country is being threatened with destruction.

The assassination of Mr. Djilali Liabes came at a time when the Higher State Council was working to assemble the nation's dynamic energies, to face up to the situation, to set up a future system for the country based on expertise, science, knowledge, and strong modern institutions and to provide conditions for the transfer of power to young and competent national cadres capable of shouldering their responsibility and of leading the country.

The assassination of Mr. Djilali Liabes was an attempt to assassinate the country's future. Messrs Djilali Liabes and Hafid Senhadri represent symbols of young, clean, honest, and competent cadres committed to the country's interest. Those young cadres are sons of the people; they came from it and continued to live in its midst, in Kouba, Ben Omar, and other popular districts.

Hopeless and traitorous criminal action will not discourage the Algerian people, their youth, national cadres and workers, from defending the Algerian homeland and state or from making serious efforts to build a strong state and to secure a bright future for our homeland and generations.

Prime Minister on Liabes Assassination

LD1603224793 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Excerpts] Prime Minister Belaid Abdesslem arrived at the Ain Naaja hospital this evening to visit the wounded Senhadri and then went to Ben Aounar quarter where the late Professor Djilali Liabes resided to present his condolences and those of the government to the family of Djilali Liabes. When he came out he made the following statement:

[Begin Belaid recording] On behalf of the government and on my own behalf, I came to express condolences on the death of our late brother, Djilali Liabes, whom we lost this morning, a victim of crime. [passage omitted]

As you know, today's crime is an operation in a series of criminal acts carried out by the people who have declared war on the Algerian people and on the Algerian state. For months they have been committing crimes and acts of sabotage with the aim of weakening this state and spreading terror among Algerians in general. Today's operation and that of the day before yesterday against our brother Mr. Senhadri, as well as those operations that preceded them, show that these people have reached a new peak by attacking the cadres of the state, especially senior ones.

The aim of this attack is known—an attempt to underline the failure of the State's organs and institutions. However, the one thing I would like to say is that today's operation as well as the previous operations will not shake the will of the state, nor the will of the government, nor the will of the regime to continue their work to save the country from this catastrophe and from this evil group which is trying to seize power with the means it has been using till today. The will of the state will continue.

I should also say that the government will study a comprehensive plan to confront this ordeal, to confront this action which is aimed at the destruction of the state. In the coming days, God willing, new measures will be taken to reinforce the antiterrorist and antisaboteur action, against those criminals who, by their actions, seek to bring down the Algerian state. Within this framework, and under the supervision of the government, we must try to involve the people more than before in the operation against those criminal actions directed against the state. On this occasion, we affirm that the state will take every measure to protect its cadres and to encourage them in their daily work to defend the Algerian state and continue their work in the service of the Algerian people.

Brother Djelali Liabes is a university professor who for a time was a member of the government and shouldered major responsibilities in the state. Throughout his life he served the interest of the Algerian people. All the responsibilities that he shouldered were in the service of the Algerian people. The blow that was dealt him is, in fact, a blow against all Algerians, against its people and state cadres.

Finally, I wish to say on this occasion that the government confirms its sincere support for the cadres whom we believe were all hurt by the blow. [passage omitted] The government confirms to them its full solidarity and readiness to continue their work. This operation will not defeat us. It will not defeat our work and we will continue our struggle until we rescue this country from this group, from those evil people who want to keep the Algerian people under pressure. We also confirm that in

the future, we will study the necessary measures to secure the success of the work of state. [passage omitted] [end recording]

More on Killings; 1 Attacker Dead

LD1603190593 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic
1700 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Excerpt] [passage omitted on killing today of former Education Minister Liabes] In a statement published today by the Higher State Council [HSC], the assassination of Professor Djilali Liabes and the armed aggression against Mr. Hafid Senhadri were considered to be a criminal plan directed against the Algerian state, the Algerian people, and the Algerian nation. The HSC pointed out that the Liabes assassination came at a time when the HSC was busy bringing together the dynamic forces of the nation, seeking to face up to the situation, and preparing a future regime for the country based on expertise, science, and knowledge.

The communique further said that the assassination of Liabes was an attempt to assassinate the future of Algeria.

From other areas, the National Council of Higher Education Teachers received with deep emotion the news of the assassination of Prof. Liabes. It condemned this crime and considered it a part of the terrorism directed against culture and liberal thinking and an infringement against university values. The council called on the university community to stop work on Saturday in denunciation of this crime.

The latest reports, quoting a communique issued by the Interior Ministry, say that one of the terrorists who assassinated Prof. Liabes this morning was found dead about 500 meters from the assassination site. The person in question is Issam Mansour, who was born on 8 February 1962 in Bab El Oued and lived in the Bourouba quarter near Badjarah. He was fatally wounded in the leg. The same source said that the security services are now looking for the accomplices in the operation and are trying to learn their identities.

Legal Action Over False REUTER Report

LD1703010293 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic
0000 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] In a statement issued in the evening of 16 March, the command of the National Gendarmerie has categorically denied that it gave any information to a REUTER agency correspondent concerning an assassination attempt on an Algerian personality. The command of the National Gendarmerie, the statement adds, was never the source of reports for foreign information media, regardless of their nationality. The statement also mentions that the command of the National Gendarmerie reserves the right to take legal action against the REUTER correspondent.

REUTER reported that Mr. Abdelkader Khomri, minister of youth and sports, was subjected to an assassination attempt, attributing the story to sources from the National Gendarmerie.

Court Concludes Terrorist Trial; Further Group Arrested

LD1703000193 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2300 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] The Algiers Special Court concluded on 16 March the trial of the terrorist [Emir] Noh group in the absence of the defense. The accused denied the charges against them and the records documented by the investigating judge, on the grounds that the investigating judge has been documenting statements that misrepresented what they had said.

A statement by the security services in the province of Boumerdes, given to the APS on 16 March, said that in the past few days the security services have arrested a terrorist group composed of eight elements who were involved in many murders and robberies in Boudouaou and Reghaia. The services have also arrested another group in the town of Flea, composed of four terrorists who were involved in similar operations, including the assassination of a warrant officer in the People's National Army.

Egypt

Musa on Israeli Withdrawal, Peace Talks, Sudan

NC1603170193 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1605 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 16 Mar (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has emphasized that Egypt welcomes any Israeli move toward a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights. He noted that such a move represents a sound beginning for achieving all elements of peace, including a comprehensive agreement with Israel.

Commenting on Israel's announcement of its intention to withdraw from the Golan in return for Syria's declaration of its concept of peace, he said the Syrian stand calls for everything in exchange for everything, and thus the withdrawal must be comprehensive.

On reports that the U.S.-Israeli talks did not deal with the deportees issue, he said: We have not been informed of the details of the talks yet. The deportees issue is still the subject of contacts between Egypt and the Israelis, Americans, and Palestinians.

Musa stressed the importance of the Palestinians' participation in the negotiations process because it mainly concerns their land and rights, and because not participating would not be in their interest. He said: We understand their political position and try to deal with it to enable them to attend the negotiations. He added: In fact, the problem is one of land and peace, not that of the

deportees, which is merely an obstacle. The problem facing us is how we can reach a just and comprehensive peace through which the Palestinian people will recover their legitimate rights.

On Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, he said the Gaza issue concerns the Palestinians.

Commenting on U.S.-Israeli strategic cooperation, the foreign minister said: Egypt is following this issue. We envisage fair dealings with all parties, especially when discussing the peace process, bearing in mind that we are not discussing an armament process. The peace process and establishing peace among the parties concerned constitute a safety valve, while increasing the amount of arms and giving preference to Israel over the other Middle East states does not favor peace.

Commenting on the situation in Sudan, Musa said: We have not heard that Egyptians have been arrested. He added that an official protest has been lodged following the Sudanese Government takeover of Cairo University's Khartoum Branch. He said: Contacts are under way with the Sudanese brothers to reach the best possible solutions to the existing problems through dialogue.

Mubarak Views Peace, Terrorism, Other Issues

NC1503153093 Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 13 Mar 93 pp 3-4, 13

["Text" of an interview with President Husni Mubarak by Bibi Khalid al-Marzuq, chief editor of Kuwaiti paper AL-ANBA, in Cairo; date not given]

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] I asked the president: The battles are over and Kuwait has been liberated. Everyone acknowledged the Egyptian role and it was within this framework that the Damascus Declaration was signed. The Declaration derives its legality from the Arab League Charter and is open to anyone who wants to join it. But this legitimate Declaration is coming under severe criticism, so much that it is being annihilated. I think that the criticism the Declaration is facing from some countries, especially Kuwait, simply settles domestic accounts in Kuwait itself. It is the settlement of Kuwaiti accounts at the expense of Egypt.

The president replied spontaneously: No. It is the settlement of Kuwaiti accounts at the expense of Kuwait.

I tried to insist on my view that it is a settlement of accounts at the expense of Egypt, but the president went on to say: No. It is at the expense of Kuwait. For example, I read in AL-JUMHURIYAH today that a Kuwaiti paper published the results of an opinion poll in Kuwait on the presence of Egyptian forces to help deter any foreign threat. The Kuwaiti paper said 46 percent do not want the Egyptian forces, 43 percent want foreign forces, and only 16 percent want Egyptian forces.

I told the president: This is another form of settling accounts. Let us examine what has happened to the

Damascus Declaration. It stipulated the establishment of political, economic, and military committees. Haven't these committees stopped meeting? Why?

The president answered with a question: Are you asking me why? I do not care at all about the Damascus Declaration. I am more interested in supporting an Arab country that is subjected to aggression as Kuwait was.

The president asked me again: Did the Damascus Declaration exist when we decided to rally politically and militarily with Kuwait and when we fought alongside the Kuwaitis?

No. The Damascus Declaration did not exist then. It was our principles that committed us.

He added: Regrettably, there has been much talk about the Damascus Declaration, as if it is a means to use for begging. Sorry. This is not our purpose. I would like to clarify things again. We did not participate in the liberation of Kuwait nor were we in solidarity with it out of greed for money. [passage omitted]

I said: We understand Egypt's role, and I know that Egypt does not abandon its principles or bargain over them. But some people judge Egypt as it appears on the surface. Somebody, for instance, would say: I met with President Mubarak...I told him...He did not tell me...[ellipses as published]

The president firmly answered: I am frank. I always deal courageously with things put to me or said in front of me.

I told the president: What happened in Kuwait was not accurate. [Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker] Ahmad al-Sa'dun spoke about his visit to Egypt in a rather vague manner. So I asked the Cairo office of AL-ANBA' about the story of the referendum on the Damascus Declaration and the claim that pressure is being applied to implement it.

The president angrily said:

Pressure! I told al-Sa'dun: Revoke it; revoke the Declaration and let us rest from it. I indignantly said to him: Who told you I want the Damascus Declaration or any other declaration? I do not care about the Damascus Declaration.

Mubarak continued: I am surprised at the National Assembly speaker who came to Cairo to make a torrent of statements. What he said differed from what other officials in Kuwait said. Therefore, I was sharp with him. I told him: You spoke a lot with the press; you said you knew nothing about the Damascus Declaration, and that the Declaration is vague and therefore you want to repeal it. Repeal it, my brother. Has anyone applied pressure on you? People's Assembly Speaker Dr. Fathi Surur and a number of ministers and ambassadors were present.

The president added: In fact, al-Sa'dun wanted to create confusion among Egyptian public opinion.

I told the president: What happened was nothing but a settling of the score. It does not negate the strategic dimension of the Damascus Declaration. The region is facing dangers, and the Gulf war reaffirmed that Egypt is the refuge for Arabs.

The president said: I once again say: I do not care about the Damascus Declaration. I care about principles, which compel me to assist any country asking for help. In times of crisis and disaster, I do not care about conventions and I do not set preconditions for helping the brothers. I am immediately available to help any Arab country subjected to aggression. [passage omitted]

I said to the president: What you said sheds light on those who use the Damascus Declaration as an arena to settle accounts in Kuwait. But there are countries opposed to the Declaration and that object to it. Iran, for example, has public stances on it.

With his usual frankness, the president said: Iran wants to control the whole Gulf. Everyone knows that. Iran wants to control the Gulf region as Iraq wanted to. Undoubtedly, the struggle between the two countries (Iran and Iraq) is a struggle for control of the Gulf region.

I said to the president: Talking about a haven in Egypt brings us to Egypt's troubles. As an Arab citizen, I am worried about recent terrorist actions against tourists. The threats will now turn against investors, as news agencies recently reported. They said a terrorist organization in Egypt has issued a statement saying it will attack investors.

The president replied simply: This talk is for public consumption; it is mere fireworks. Anyone can lift the telephone and say I am this or that organization and threaten to do this or that. That's what happened in New York's big explosion. A million people claimed responsibility.

In Egypt, these are routine threats and there are also illogical or incomprehensible allegations. The latest thing said in a statement to a news agency is that the Egyptians are spending their money on tourists, not on the Egyptian people. Does this talk make sense? I believe it is mere drivel that does not come from a sane man.

I asked the president: What did you mean when you told the National Democratic Party Political Club that terrorism exists everywhere, not only in Egypt?

He said: I meant that it is a global phenomenon. Terrorism exists in every country. No country is free from terrorism, not even developed countries. Terrorist actions were carried out in Spain. There were terrorist actions in the United States, which has many of them. I believe the New York explosion proves my view that terrorism is a global phenomenon. Not one week passes in England without one or two terrorist acts. The same applies to France and Italy. On the Arab level, there is terrorism in Algeria. I warned them of it when Chadli Bendjedid was president. I warned the Arab brothers everywhere.

I asked the president: Now that your view that terrorism is a global phenomenon has been proved, does it not merit a global confrontation?

He said: It was long before they [not further identified] became convinced that terrorism is a global phenomenon. Now they must understand that the phenomenon requires global confrontation.

The odd thing is that news agencies and newspapers, despite knowing that terrorism is a global phenomenon, exaggerate events in Egypt.

Believe me, the terrorists are a gang of criminals and outlaws. Most of them were in Afghanistan. Each one earned \$1,000 or \$1,500 a month and when the military operations in Afghanistan ended, they started to look for other sources of work and finance. They found their goal in Iran. But Tehran does not give them much and they are moving from Iran and Sudan and from Sudan to Egypt.

These people are the same gang that committed terrorist actions in the past. They are members of the Society of Repudiation and Renunciation and al-Jihad groups that assassinated [former President] Anwar al-Sadat.

I asked the president: Does Iran actually finance them?

He said: Iran is deeply involved in this issue.

I asked the president: If Iran is the main center for exporting terrorism, do you think international sanctions should be imposed, as with other countries that export terrorism?

The president replied: I do not wish to talk about international sanctions, but I would like to stress that Iran quite clearly exports and organizes terrorist operations.

I said to the president: Iran encourages terrorism, but circumstances in Egypt might be contributing to this. For example, some verdicts have not been implemented.

He replied: There are no unimplemented verdicts in Egypt. They are carried out scrupulously, whether they are passed by military or civil courts without distinction.

I asked the president: Do you attribute the Islamic upsurge in Egypt to economic conditions?

The president answered: First we must be specific about the concept so that we will not be confused. If the talk is about Islamic upsurge, Egypt has been an Islamic state throughout its history and its people are Muslim. Egypt is the country where al-Azhar, the beacon of Islam, is located. Within al-Azhar, preachers and ulema live and move about with their genuine thought. They represent the most predominant and overwhelming trend for Muslims and Islam through moderation.

As for the extremist upsurge meant by your question, it is not a proper Islamic upsurge. This extremist upsurge is just a tool used by some forces, whether abroad or within, that seek through this trend to impose hegemony and guardianship in the name of Islam.

The confrontation in Egypt is between a moderate Islam and intellectual extremism hiding behind the name of Islam. This extremism will not survive in Egypt because the people are wary, comprehending, and know the facts. That a few terrorists could control all our society is inconceivable. Thus, we are talking about terrorism, terrorists, and outlaws. This breed of people is present in rich countries. Does this mean that the reason is the economic situation?

People like this exist in Kuwait. Is the economic situation in Kuwait bad?

I said: Yes, Your Excellency.

He replied spontaneously: May God give us your bad situation. He elaborated: Some terrorist forces lived under the protection of rich countries that will suffer from terrorism. I know these countries well but will not name them.

I asked: Your Excellency, do you believe that the Islamic upsurge has been able to project itself in this manner because of a political vacuum?

He replied: Let us discuss the matter with a degree of logic and tolerance. You hear of an Islamic upsurge in Egypt because we are a democratic country that guarantees free press and the right of expression and lives in a truly democratic atmosphere. On the contrary, had the regime in Egypt been dictatorial, no one would have heard of an Islamic upsurge.

You do not hear about it in some countries although an Islamic upsurge exists in them. These countries deal with such currents with force and summary annihilation.

I said to the president: If you do not believe that the economic situation and political vacuum are the cause of terrorism and that on the contrary Egypt enjoys a great deal of democracy, then there must be foreign elements that incite and plan. Do you believe that Sudanese leader al-Bashir and Islamic Front leader al-Turabi have a role in instigation and planning?

The president answered: I am not giving names but say that Egypt is able to handle spies [‘anasir madsusah] and instigators. Here in Egypt both the state and people are against trading in Islam and terrifying peaceful citizens in the name of Islam.

I asked the president: Is it true that Iran has a military presence in Sudan and has forces in Port Sudan?

The president said: No. If Iran had a military presence, I would never keep silent. We are capable of confrontation and we know its limits. A military presence there would be no joke and could not be ignored. It would threaten Egypt's national security and we would deal with it very carefully.

I asked the president: Talk about Iran and Sudan leads us to Iraq. What is your view of Iraq's future?

The president answered tersely: It will not change and will remain the same.

I asked the president: Does this mean that Saddam Husayn will maintain his approach toward other countries?

The president answered briefly: Yes, he will, and he might even launch aggression against others and he may violate international resolutions.

I said: Does this mean that the recent violations of the Kuwaiti borders and the missile crisis could recur?

The president said: I believe that what happened was merely an attempt to do something and we waited to see where things would end. The Iraqi commanders saw the results of what happened. I believe that they got the message that the world will not keep silent about any attempt to attack Kuwait or occupy its territory. Despite the fact that I am dissatisfied with the situation, I maintain that we are against partitioning Iraq, Sudan, and Somalia. We do not agree that foreign countries partition Arab countries. Regrettably, certain countries are partitioning themselves, as is happening in Somalia. [passage omitted]

I asked the president: Where have the Middle East peace efforts reached?

The president said: The peace train is currently passing through the region. This is the last peace train. If we do not get on it, the world will not bear our problems anymore and will give up this problem. There are, of course, problems on the way. The deportees issue is one of them, but if we stop at this problem, there will be no peace.

I asked him frankly: Does this mean that Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] succeeded in foiling the peace process?

The president said: No, Hamas threatens the Palestinian delegation. Although we are trying to find a solution to the deportees problem so that the peace talks may continue, the Hamas people slandered us. The matter is strange and contradictory: We are trying to help them but they are slandering us. When certain Egyptian writers responded and revealed the facts about the Egyptian efforts, they seem to have regained their senses and began praising us. The question remains a puzzle to me. I often wonder if foreign forces are using them in the region. I do not know.

I asked the president: Will bilateral talks take place between Syria and Israel?

The president said: There are the bilateral working sessions.

I said: I mean secret meetings?

The president said: The Arab cordon states will meet at the end of this month. They have to discuss the situation and its repercussions. Personally, I advise all parties to

continue the negotiations until the issue is settled and just peace is established in the region. There are forces that have no interest in peace and they try to obstruct the peace process.

I asked the president: Will the peace include Lebanon?

He replied: Peace will include the entire region.

I said: Your Excellency, you said in a previous interview that the situation in Lebanon still needs some more time.

He replied: What I said was related to the circumstances at the time. The situation is different now. The logical thing is for the Palestinian organizations to leave Lebanese territory once the Palestinian issue is resolved. All parties must return to their respective countries or have their case settled somehow.

I asked: Does this mean resettling the Palestinians in Lebanon?

He said: If agreement is reached on resettlement, that is another matter. What I mean is that everything must be done by agreement. The most important task now is to agree to continue the peace process. The Arab parties must agree among themselves on how to deal with Israel. The PLO must determine its stance with courage. Syria must specify what it wants to get from the peace process. Afterwards it will be easy to agree on whether the Palestinians will be resettled in Lebanon or returned to their country.

I told the president: What you are saying indicates that certain forces are obstructing peace. Can you name them?

He gave a concise answer: They are very well known. No further clarification is necessary.

I asked: Your Excellency, the appearance of Hamas and other forces in the occupied territories is pulling the rug out from under the PLO's feet. Is it time to reconsider the PLO's status as the Palestinian people's sole legitimate representative?

He answered: That status was enshrined in an Arab summit resolution [in Rabat in 1974]. It cannot be retracted.

This answer tempted me to ask a provocative question: Your Excellency, some Arab summit resolutions have been retracted. Egypt returned to the Arab world. The Arab League headquarters were restored to Egypt.

He said: I have always said that Egypt can isolate but cannot be isolated. What happened at the Baghdad Arab summit [where resolutions were passed boycotting Egypt diplomatically and economically in 1979] took place under pressure and threats.

I told the president: The PLO also exerted pressure to isolate Egypt.

He replied: All the pressure came from Iraq. Yes, the PLO participated in exerting pressure, but we can excuse the Palestinians because they have neither territory nor homeland. They are homeless and for this reason I excuse them. A look back over recent history will show that isolating Egypt was a crime against the Gulf. It was followed by a scheme to control the Gulf region. [passage omitted]

I asked the president about the veracity of reports on the establishment of a national front to confront terrorism and extremism.

The president said: We have national parties that adopt a clear stand adhering to the people's interests in the present and future. The means may differ but the major national goals remain the same. They adopt the same stand on extremism and terrorism. It is only natural that there should be criticism by the opposition parties. There are legitimate channels for criticism. We have the People's Assembly and local councils. Laws are proposed and discussed in the national and party newspapers. Good views are put forward in open dialogue. The same thing occurs at the People's Assembly. Sound views always prevail. I would like to stress that I do not act in favor of one party but of all parties. Anyone who deviates from the national course, I leave him but I do not confiscate his freedom. I want our people to learn what is right and what is wrong. Our people must learn that the government is not responsible for everything. If a certain official or a newspaper makes a mistake, the people have to confront this. The people should write and respond to the erroneous party or newspaper. This is what I want our people to do. It is wrong for the people to wait for the government to respond or take a stand against a newspaper or party. [passage omitted].

I said: Mr. President, you are at the threshold of a third term in office. What is your platform?

The president said: I have not yet thought about a third term in office. This issue is premature. The presidency imposes heavy burdens and that is why I say the issue is premature.

Despite my intense persistence in discussing this issue, President Mubarak refrained from continuing the discussion. [passage omitted]

'Arafat Adviser Sha'th Arrives From Amman

NC1603150093 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1418 GMT
16 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 16 Mar (MENA)—Dr. Nabil Sha'th, political adviser to Palestinian president Yasir 'Arafat, arrived in Cairo from Amman this afternoon ending a four-day visit to Jordan.

During the visit, he held talks with Jordanian officials on the latest developments in the Arab region, the Palestinian deportees issue, and the possibility of resuming the peace talks.

Minister on Steps To Undercut Israeli Pipeline

NC1603175193 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1655 GMT
16 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 16 Mar (MENA)—Dr. Hamdi al-Banbi, minister of petroleum and mineral resources, has stated that the development of the SUMED [Suez-Mediterranean] pipeline that carries Arab oil to the Mediterranean Sea will prevent the implementation of a new Israeli project to build a pipeline to carry oil to the Mediterranean in the future following the signing of peace treaties with the Arab countries.

Speaking at the meeting of the People's Assembly's Industrial Committee, which met under Dr. Amin Mubarak, Dr. al-Banbi revealed that the study that Israel prepared for this project shows Israel's plan to carry oil from Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar through a pipeline to the Mediterranean Sea. He stressed that Egypt has extended the SUMED agreement with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates for another 28 years since these countries possess half the world's oil reserves.

On another point, the minister said it has been decided to continue to offer bids for oil exploration and drilling in areas of the Red Sea until August to provide opportunities to foreign companies that have studied these areas. He added that foreign oil companies have reduced their drilling investments by 30 percent and also rendered a large number of their experts and employees redundant because of the drop and subsequent stability in the price of crude oil. He noted that foreign oil companies are reducing their exploration expenditures.

He added that there are new oil exploration agreements, which will be submitted soon to the People's Assembly. These agreements are more flexible, but do not relinquish the state's rights. He added that an agreement—the first of its kind—with a private Egyptian oil exploration company will be submitted soon to the People's Assembly.

President's Plans for Islamic Issues Outlined

NC1603145593 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio
Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] President Muhammad Husni Mubarak received Awqaf Minister Dr. Muhammad 'Ali Mahjub at the presidential office this morning.

Afterward, Dr. Mahjub said, within the context of President Mubarak's support for Islamic preaching and interest in religious movements, the president reviewed the achievements of joint planning by al-Azhar and the Ministry of Awqaf and reassured himself on the plans of the Ministry of Awqaf.

He added that the president discussed the new plans for Islamic preaching and praised al-Azhar's great role under al-Azhar's shaykh. The president expressed his full satisfaction with the actions of al-Azhar shaykh and the visits by

ulama delegations to all governorates, noting that this is regarded as the beginning of a new phase in religious preaching. He said that President Mubarak urged further moves in all governorates to clarify the proper image of moderate Islamic thought, so that terrorist groups will be isolated and the country will be spared dangerous acts committed in the name of religion.

Coordination with Islamic agencies was also discussed at the meeting. The president emphasized the need to pay an urgent visit to the commonwealth countries to study the project of an Islamic center, which Egypt will present as a gift to Kazakhstan as the first center of its kind in that country. During his visit, the president will lay the foundation for this center and a delegation will visit Kazakhstan immediately after 'Id al-Fitr.

Dr. Mahjub said President Mubarak called for consolidating cooperation with the brothers in the Islamic nation. Within this framework, the minister of awqaf will visit Saudi Arabia to sign a cooperation protocol with Saudi Arabia. The president also called for paying attention to Muslims in Africa. A protocol will be signed with Nigeria.

The president requested that Egypt's celebration of the anniversary of the Koran's revelation and preachers day be held at an international level and that invitations be addressed to a large number of Islamic delegation to attend this ceremony.

He said that President Mubarak praised the issuance of the first translation of the Koran's explanation into English on the anniversary of Koran's revelation, an unprecedented event. The president asked that this explanation be translated into international languages, such as the French, Russian, and Spanish and that the translation be distributed in the Islamic world as much as possible.

The president called for greater attention to mosques, for efforts to turn them into collective institutions, and for plans to annex all mosques to the Ministry of Awqaf so that they offer social, religious, and cultural services and take on a social image.

Dr. Mahjub said he showed the president the Mubarak Prize that is offered to the governorate that finishes reading the Koran first. The president designated 100,000 pounds for this prize, to be offered al-Minufiyah Governorate.

The president called for improving the conditions of preachers, and for giving them adequate orientation and proper guidance in explaining Islamic thought and causes at local and international levels.

'Vain Regime' in Sudan Labeled 'Fools'

NC1703092893 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0720 GMT
17 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 17 Mar (MENA)—AL-AHRAM writes that despite the distress and grief generated by the al-Bashir

government's closure of the Khartoum branch of Cairo University, this step should have been expected from a regime that sets the spoiling of the eternal relations between the two fraternal people as its primary goal.

In its editorial today, the paper says that the coupist regime fabricated imaginary battles with Egypt in a despicable attempt to demonstrate its might before the helpless Sudanese people, as though that vain regime had solved all the problems of the brothers who are afflicted by it and its erratic daily practices that can never be made into a comprehensible national political program. It thought that it could play a leading heroic role and, finding no other target, the regime thought Egypt would be easy, because it would not respond to these trivialities. Egypt believes that its cultural values are too sublime to be dragged to these lowly levels and that its historic role and strong ties with the Sudanese people will never let it act in a reactionary way that would undermine the interests of brothers or blemish deep-rooted ties.

AL-AHRAM also says that only fools who can't see past their own noses would do what the quixotic al-Bashir regime did, when it selected Egypt as an arena for its thoughtless battle, knowing that Egypt would not respond to this childish conduct and hurt its sons in the south. Only such fools would do what that regime did, when it saw in its stupid dreams that Egypt could fuel the battles it fabricates, hoping to perpetuate itself by further humiliating the people under the worn out excuse of facing threats on the borders—an excuse that only tyrants use.

In conclusion, AL-AHRAM states that the falsification of facts cannot continue for long. It warns the regime against the wrath of the people when they rise up to gain triumph for the right and the brothers, exercise their usurped will, and restore their true status within the framework of progress and revival.

'Unprecedented' Anti-Islam Media Campaign Viewed

NC1603121093 Cairo AKHBAR AL-YAWM in Arabic
13 Mar 93 p 9

[From the "In Plain Arabic" column by Muhammad Tantawi]

[Text] A fierce war has been declared against Islam. As soon as defendant Muhammad Salamah was arrested on charges of involvement in bombing the World Trade Center in New York, U.S. newspapers ran headlines accusing Islam and Islamic extremism of committing this inhuman act. These papers did not wait for the outcome of the investigation. The campaign against Islam has been tense. Even the front pages of magazines leveled accusations against Muslims and condemned them as terrorists.

Fabrications and tendentious statements received unprecedented wide coverage. The sensational headlines

stirred hate in the hearts of Americans for Muslims. Everyone knows hate campaigns can have a violent influence on U.S. and Western society, influence that could lead to persecution, killing, and the torture of Muslims living in the United States and Europe.

It is a premeditated campaign against this religion that advocates good deeds, helping the needy, aiding the poor, giving up hatred, keeping away from sins, forbidding killing, and fighting all forms of crime. There is no genuine Muslim who would agree to offend his religion in this way.

Criminal investigations require finding out who would benefit from a crime to identify the criminal. If Muslims are the victims of such crimes, how can we accuse them of committing them?

There are secret forces with an interest in using individuals who belong to Islam by name but who have nothing to do with the religion. The goal is to distort the image of Islam and Muslims. In the past we would see Zionist-financed movies distort the image of Muslims, portraying them as robbers, highwaymen, and slave traders. With Islamic communities spreading in several European countries and the United States and Muslims in the Islamic republics of the former Soviet Union becoming liberated with a strong voice, a new plan was created to strike at Islam in a bloody way.

This is a new cunning way to distort the true image of Islam and link it with acts of violence, terrorism, and bloodshed. Certain U.S. papers went as far as to report that Islamic extremists used a bedroom in a New York mosque as a den to forge bank notes to buy arms and explosives.

The crimes of violence, killing, and terrorism we now see in our country, in Algeria, Afghanistan, and in other Islamic and foreign countries are primarily intended to strike at Islam. There is no objection to striking at the Islamic countries' economies, so the enemies of Islam can kill two birds with one stone.

It is really strange to see Muslim youths being entrapped in the name of Islam to achieve the goals of Islam's enemies. Our youths should be more careful about this cunning scheme and adhere to the true teachings of their religion and keep away from acts of violence and terrorism that only benefit the enemies of Muslims.

CNN, 'Riddles' of American Politics Criticized

NC1303191893 Cairo AL-AHRAM PRESS AGENCY in Arabic 1434 GMT 13 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 13 Mar (MENA)—Under the headline "Crocodile Tears Over Terrorist Blood," AL-WAFD Chief Editor Jamal Badawi writes the following article today:

Under the headline "The Egyptian People Support Extremist Groups," news agencies yesterday reported that the American news network CNN had shown two

images: the first showing streams of blood running down the staircase of an extremist's home and soldiers pouring water on the steps to wash away the blood; the second showing the al-Rahman mosque in Aswan, where a battle raged between extremists and the police. CNN concluded that the Egyptian people support extremist Islamist groups and oppose the battles in which the police attack these groups!!

It is beyond us to grasp how the American network reached this brilliant conclusion! Has it undertaken a referendum or a questionnaire among the Egyptian people that showed that they support terrorism and extremism and oppose standing up to them? Has there ever been a group of people in the world that supported terrorism and shunned security? Assuming that such people exist, their mere presence would be alien to human nature. How can such falsehoods be attributed to the Egyptian people, who have built their civilization on the values of peace, security, and stability since the dawn of humanity?

If the American network is concerned over the blood of the extremists who were killed in clashes with the police, why did it not show the same sympathy and concern for the blood of the officers and soldiers who fell victim to terrorist bullets? Or is it admissible in the American tradition to shed the blood of security men and inadmissible or prohibited to shed the blood of terrorists?

By God, we fail to understand the riddles of American politics, its orientations, and the lines it pursues. We no longer know whether it is a guardian of democracy or whether it is prepared to embrace the devil, support terrorism, make loud protestations of grief and sorrow for its victims, and then twist the facts and allege that the Egyptian people support terrorism!!

It is certain that the Americans do not understand the Egyptian people correctly and do not want to understand them, or want to understand them in a manner that suits their own interest, even if this leads Egypt to the grip of terrorism. The recent past is full of precedents; may God have mercy on Iran's shah, who was forsaken by the White House to lay the road open to the ayatollahs.

All signs indicate that American politics need more understanding of the nature of the Egyptian people and their human, religious, and spiritual components. Egypt is an Islamic state; the Egyptians are the most adherent to their religion among all Muslim people. This does not mean, however, that they offer their necks to groups who use the bomb, the dagger, and the gun as an instrument of ruling, domination, hegemony, and oppression.

Egyptians refuse to let anyone carry a bomb in his left hand and the Koran in his right. They understand the Koran correctly and know that, contrary to claims by instigators of sedition, the ignorant, and the malevolent, Islam did not spread all over the world with swords, oppression, and violence. Islam spread through justice, goodheartedness, and good examples. It gained followers from the south of France to the borders of China. The miracle of Islam is still

being manifested; Islam gains supporters day after day in the heart of Europe and America, not by the power of the bomb or dagger, but thanks to its simplicity, tolerance, nobility, and tenderness. Why then all that uproar for the sake of bloodletters and carriers of iron chains and explosive devices? Why all that wailing for terrorism? Or is it just crocodile tears that only stand for wickedness, slyness, and evil intentions?!

Line Between Moderates, Extremists Said To Vanish

NC1303134193 Cairo AL-MUSAWWAR in Arabic
12 Mar 93 pp 5, 7

[Article by Chief Editor Makram Ahmad Makram: "Islam and Terrorism: Remarks About the New York Bombing"]

[Excerpts] What could Islam and Arabism possibly gain from New York's horrible explosion if an extremist Islamic group with close links to 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman proves to be behind the incident?

'Abd-al-Rahman, the shaykh of terrorism, denied that his group has any link with the crime, despite strong suspicions that some of his disciples might actually be involved.

In fact, the motives of this mad terrorist crime are baffling. The perpetrators did not even say why they did it. [passage omitted]

The attack is most likely part of a complicated, wide-scale conspiracy designed to distort the image of Islam in the Western world. An attempt to embody Islam, in the eyes of Americans, as a religion hostile to civilization and human progress, as the archenemy of good relations between East and West, and as a fanatic advocate of confrontation and violence. That some Islamic hands got involved in the attack—whether out of foolishness or frustration—does not hurt the conspiracy; indeed, it helps it.

The organizations of political Islam in the Arab world rushed to acquit themselves of the attack. Everybody—moderates and extremists—denied that the crime was perpetrated by any Islamic group because Islam does not advocate violence. Islam rejects the shedding of innocent blood, emphasizes intertwined interests and friendship among nations, and does not antagonize any nation unless it starts war and hostility against Islam.

The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, Egypt, and all other Arab countries condemned the crime. 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman disciples in Pakistan and the United States also condemned the attack and denied any connection with it, saying it is impossible for any Islamic group to commit such a heinous crime.

While all sides competed to issue urgent denunciation statements, they deliberately shut their mouths and said nothing about the terrorist acts in Egypt—acts that kill

innocent people and threaten the security of a nation trying hard to overcome its hardships.

Is it not surprising that political Islamic groups in Egypt and the Arab world remain mute about the Wadi al-Nil Cafe explosion and other attacks targeting tourism in the country when all the choirs, extremists and moderates alike, rush to play tunes of denunciation for the New York attack?

Is it fear? Is it hypocrisy? Or has the line dividing moderation and extremism in the groups of political Islam become an imaginary one? [passage omitted]

The problem with those who call themselves moderates is that they remained silent about those who sprang from under their cloaks to distort the image of Islam for too long. They remained silent on groups that linked Islam to violence and used religion as a means to realize their political ambitions, corrupting the souls of young men and eliminating the values of homeland, humanity, and conscience from their hearts.

The moderate trend failed to mend Islam's distorted image when it remained silent on Tehran's practices and appalling human right violations, when it supported Saddam Husayn in his ugly crime, when it wrongly supported the Sudanese regime that executed its opponents without trial, and when it said nothing against the crimes being committed in Egypt—crimes that every Muslim is ashamed of.

The political Islamic groups remained completely silent when they should have loudly denounced terrorism regardless of its motives. They exhausted themselves searching for justifications for crimes that neither religion nor public interests tolerate, and they refused to abandon a long history of violence and secret activity.

For these reasons, the dividing lines between moderation and extremism in political Islamic groups have vanished. They became imaginary lines more suitable for distributing roles than for differentiating between stands. This is why the cries of denunciation that are now echoing everywhere appear like shouts in vacuum that no one wants to believe or take seriously.

Muslim Brothers Denounce Wave of Violence

NC1603100093 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 12 Mar 93 p 6

[Text] The Muslim Brotherhood has issued a statement denouncing the current wave of violence and explaining its stand, which calls for the implementation of the Islamic shari'ah and denounces mutual revenge. The statement says: Never in its modern history has Egypt witnessed waves of violence on the scale of the recent incidents that have killed over 100 people, including children, women, officers, soldiers, and youths.

The Muslim Brotherhood outlined its stand on the events as follows:

1. It affirms its principled stand denouncing violence, regardless of its source. It calls for a final and real end to the acts of violence and for the achievement of security and peace for the homeland and its citizens.

The Muslim Brotherhood draws attention to the gravity of any attempt to link these events with Islam. Almighty God has charted the course of the Islamic call in his holy book: "Invite (all) to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious." [Koranic verse]

2. It denounces the principles of mutual revenge and vengeance. Instead, it calls for a spirit of justice and the implementation of the Islamic shari'ah, which preserves blood, honor, property, and sanctities.

In its call for God, the Muslim Brotherhood has, in the past, set good examples for its torturers. It has not committed any acts of revenge or vengeance.

3. It joins its voices with all those who call for a comprehensive and real end to the problem of violence, which is a symptom of an endemic disease in society. It declares that any solution that does not include real popular participation is deficient.

It calls for the lifting of restrictions imposed on popular participation and for freedom of expression for all political forces so that they may participate effectively in solving the homeland's issues and achieving comprehensive political, economic, and social reforms.

All the popular and political forces are called upon to adopt a unified stand to emerge from this cycle of violence and seek real reforms that will achieve the people's aspirations for a free and dignified life overshadowed by the creed of God almighty.

Four Westerners Charged With Inciting Sedition

PM1603122693 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 14 Mar 93 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Four Westerners Arrested on Charges of Incitement in Egypt"]

[Excerpt] Cairo, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—Authoritative sources yesterday revealed that Egypt has arrested four Westerners on charges of inciting sectarian sedition. An authoritative source from the Egyptian State Security Prosecution Office has confirmed the arrest report, saying that the four are foreigners: three Americans and a New Zealander. They carried out missionary activities for the Christian religion in a manner that violates Egyptian laws and the Islamic faith, which bans working to convert Muslims to Christianity. Besides, what they did was liable to arouse sectarian sedition tendencies.

The authoritative source added that an official from the U.S. Embassy in Cairo had read the charges contained in the lawsuit presented to investigate these foreigners, and that the Egyptian authorities requested their deportation.

Interior Minister 'Abd-al-Halim Musa issued a decision to detain the four foreigners for 45 days pending investigation.

Security authorities have imposed tight security around the furnished apartment which the detained four rented in center Cairo and which the sources said was found to contain "huge quantities of material calling for Christianization and inciting sedition." [passage omitted]

Sidqi Answers Questions on Corruption Case

NC1603210193 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1857 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Excerpts] Cairo, 16 Mar (MENA)—Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi has announced that the government will not cover up any corruption or unlawfulness and that no person is too highly placed to be questioned or taken to task if he deviates.

Answering questions by People's Assembly members about the recent dismissal of senior state employees and these dismissals' link with the arrest of an Armenian woman, Sidqi said that Egypt's public prosecutor issued a decision today banning the publication of reports on this issue to protect people's honor.

Dr. Sidqi explained that the government had not been fooled and knew of this development as early as late November 1992 through the Administrative Supervision Committee, which is under the prime minister's authority.

Dr. Sidqi added that if it is proven that some officials were involved in the issue, the government will not cover up anything. [passage omitted]

Sidqi said he received a letter from the public prosecutor through Justice Minister Faruq Sayf-al-Nasr emphasizing that the investigations did not involve the names of any ministers. He explained that perhaps the female defendant in question wished to involve the names of senior officials in the case. He pointed out that the lawyers are aware of this fact.

Sidqi added that two of the officials involved have resigned their posts and five others are in custody. He asserted that nothing was published at first because no definite facts were known, and that it was the government which started the pertinent proceedings when it discovered the facts. [passage omitted]

[Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic in its 12 March issue publishes a report by Muhammad Zayid in the "People's Interests" section on page 17 about the circumstances surrounding the dismissal of three senior officials. The report says: "Without going into the details of personal matters, informed sources have emphatically denied the rumors that the three dismissed senior officials were involved in espionage, political activities, financial corruption, accepting bribes, or linked with drug traffickers. The highly placed sources totally ruled out that Egyptian security agencies have been penetrated.]

["The informed sources said that the case pertains to an Armenian woman's attempt to win the friendship of several important officials to serve certain personal interests. The woman in question is the cousin of two female show business stars. She was formerly married to a millionaire who inherited a major tobacco business from his father, a well-known name in the tobacco business. She subsequently divorced him and obtained a court ruling awarding her 1,800 Egyptian pounds a month in alimony for one year. She resorted to the courts again to have the amount of alimony increased and extended for more than one year. She appealed to a senior figure to help her with some judges. One judge visited her more than once in her Heliopolis villa, not knowing that a high-level supervisory agency was watching him. He was caught red-handed during the woman's ensuing attempt to corrupt him in return for raising her alimony to 7,000 pounds a month and extending it for more than one year. Two other judges involved in the case resigned their posts."]

Editorial Questions Failure To Combat Corruption

NC1303192893 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 9 Mar 93 p 1

[Editorial: "How About Combating Corruption in Egypt?"]

[Excerpts] At a time when the true democratic regimes in the world are hunting down corruption and are demolishing the bastions of the corrupt, we find that corruption in Egypt is spreading and is planting its roots in all work sites.

In Japan, the former deputy leader of the ruling party and the party secretary have been arrested on charges of tax evasion and of hiding the sources of their income. They will stand trial for having exploited their political influence to stockpile huge fortunes. This has generated popular wrath in Japan. [passage omitted]

All this is taking place in advanced countries. Undoubtedly, this is the secret behind the progress and superiority of these countries. But in Egypt things are different. Talk about corruption and the corrupt has become a habit.

The most dangerous thing in Egypt is the silence on certain issues, which are shrouded in mystery. The last of these issues is represented in the repeated charges about relieving or dismissing several ranking officials, particularly those in the police corps.

In the absence of an official announcement about the charges against those officials—one of them was at the head of a leading government apparatus—rumors are being spread here and there. Some people have even gone so far as to add whatever information they like against this or that official.

Despite all the rumors, which have become the talk of every house, not a single official has made any official announcement to clarify matters.

This is the difference between us and the advanced countries. They announce everything about corruption and try the corrupt, while we leave corruption to spread and we do not tell the people why this or that official has been relieved of his post.

Government Said Planning To Withdraw Subsidies

NC1603165993 Cairo AL-AHRAM PRESS AGENCY in Arabic 1426 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 16 Mar (AL-AHRAM PRESS AGENCY)—The opposition paper AL-WAFD carried the following report as its main story in today's issue:

"AL-WAFD" has learned that the new agreement between the government and the World Bank includes withdrawing all subsidies on supplies and basic commodities and most public services within 12 months. The agreement and "memorandum of understanding" that Egypt presented to the bank also stipulates the full liberalization of internal and foreign trade within the same period. The agreement also includes repealing compulsory prices of some commodities and basic services, including transport and communications.

Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi has failed to end the disagreements over liberalizing the cotton and sugar cane trade and over paying farmers the real price of crops in accordance with prices on world commodities markets. The government seeks to postpone restoring the farmers' rights until the season after next.

The government has also failed to agree on the clauses of the draft law preventing monopolies, scheduled to be presented to the People's Assembly after 'Id al-Fitr [around 23 March]. Increasingly, officials and competent departments disagree over the definition of monopoly, penalties, and over when to introduce the law.

Red Sea Port Project, Hala'ib Explorations Noted

NC1603130193 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1145 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 16 Mar (MENA)—Engineer Fathi al-Mursi, president of the al-Nasr Phosphate Company, has announced that 28 million Egyptian pounds have been earmarked for developing and modernizing the Abu Ramad port on the Red Sea to receive ships with a capacity of up to 2,000 tons. Such ships transport mineral raw materials to factories, particularly to the area of Abu Zanimah in Sinai which houses the ferromanganese alloys factory that started production a few days ago using manganese recently mined in Hala'ib.

He said that a study has been launched to explore the possibility of cultivating the 10 valleys between Shal-atayn and the 22d Parallel by building several dams and reservoirs to store rain water and irrigate crops and vegetables for the region's inhabitants. He also said two desalination plants will be built on the Red Sea, each

with a production capacity of 50 tons potable water per day, to avoid having to bring water by ship from Suez.

He noted that the water the two stations will produce, in addition to newly discovered underground water, will more than cover the needs of the inhabitants and workers.

Al-Mursi added that there are projects to study ways to exploit the fish resources of the areas around Hala'ib and to employ windmills to generate the electricity needed for an ice factory and for other mining projects and utilities.

Bus Bombers, Cafe Attackers Said From Same Group

NC1603213993 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2109 GMT
16 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 16 Mar (MENA)—A security official has announced that the perpetrators of the explosion in al-Tahrir Square today belong to the same terrorist group that bombed the Wadi al-Nil Coffee Shop in the same area on 26 February.

The official told MENA that the members of this terrorist group divided themselves into two smaller groups. One group specialized in robbing jewelry stores to finance terrorist operations and purchase the necessary weapons and ammunition. The second group focused on attacking tourist gathering points with the aim of undermining the nation's economy and disrupting security and stability.

The security official noted that during their recent campaigns in Cairo, Giza, and al-Qalyubiyah Governorates, security forces succeeded in eliminating the majority of the terrorists belonging to the first group and in arresting the remainder of this group.

He affirmed that the security forces will continue their raids to apprehend the members of the second group, who have attacked tourists and carried out two bombings in al-Tahrir Square in the past three weeks.

'Extremist' Jumps to His Death in Asyut

NC1603184593 Cairo MENA in English 1821 GMT
16 Mar 93

[Text] Asyut, Upper Egypt, 16 Mar (MENA)—An extremist was killed today when he jumped out of a window on the fourth floor while security agents were heading to arrest him.

The extremist died immediately before being detained by the police among the suspects of extremist groups.

Two Killed in Clashes; Explosions Heard in Asyut NC1703074793 Paris AFP in English 0716 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Asyut, Egypt, March 17 (AFP) - Two policemen were killed and nine wounded in overnight clashes with Muslim fundamentalists in this southern town, police said Wednesday [17 March].

The fighting broke out as security forces launched searches of suspected fundamentalist strongholds in different parts of the town.

Fundamentalists opened fire and threw bombs as police arrived to arrest them. Four explosions were heard at dawn and sporadic firing was continuing, an AFP correspondent reported.

Fundamentalists were holed up in several apartment blocks from where they were firing on police deployed in the streets.

The security forces sealed off areas where the fighting was going on, and police sent school children home for fear of stray bullets.

Around 100 people have died in Muslim fundamentalist violence in the past year.

Trial of 49 Suspects Adjourned Until 20 Mar

NC1303140593 Cairo MENA in English 1213 GMT
13 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, March 13—(MENA)—The Higher Military Court adjourned the session of trial of those charged with striking tourism and disrupting security till next Saturday [20 March] to give the defendants' lawyers more time to examine the dossier of the case, which includes over 2,000 papers.

The session, held at the premises of the Military Court in the Hikestep area, north of here, ran for only 20 minutes. It was attended by 42 of the accused, as seven of them are still at large, as well as the lawyers, families of the defendants and Arab and foreign media men.

EC Extends 200 Million-Egyptian-Pound Grant

NC1303141593 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio
Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 13 Mar 93

[From the press review]

[Text] AKHBAR AL-YAWM reports that the European Community has agreed to extend to Egypt a nonrefundable grant worth 200 million Egyptian pounds. The money will be lent to private sector projects. The paper adds that the European Community has agreed to extend this grant to boost small industries in Egypt in various fields of activity.

Libya

European Firms Said To Build Poison Gas Factory

AU1603155293 Frankfurt/Main FRANKFURTER
ALLGEMEINE in German 16 Mar 93 p 7

[Udo Ulfkotte report: "European Companies Help Libya Build Another Poison Gas Factory"]

[Text] Frankfurt, 15 March—Several companies from Switzerland, Japan, Italy, Denmark, Austria, Great Britain, France, and Poland are under suspicion of illegally helping Libya build a new poison gas factory—one of the largest in the Third World. On the other hand, the investigation proceedings on a German engineer in Luenen will be discontinued by the public prosecutors in Bochum before the end of this month. Less than a month ago, the Federal Government noted with annoyance that U.S. State Department spokesman Snyder publicly accused three German companies of having supplied component parts for the construction of a new Libyan poison gas factory. It is true that Snyder added that companies from other countries were also involved in the project, but—unlike in the case of the German firms—he declined to give their names, so as not to discredit them.

Despite the sanctions that the United Nations imposed against Libya on 15 April last year, Libyan revolution leader al-Qadhdhafi apparently has no problems in procuring the components for the construction of another poison gas factory abroad. This second chemical weapons factory will be of the same type as the poison gas factory in al-Rabitah. Since the middle of last year, there has been a lot of activity on the building site in the village Ras Fam Mullaghah near the town of Tarhuna, 65 kilometers southeast of Tripoli. According to Western security circles, on the edge of chalky sandstone mountains, two parallel underground tunnel systems roughly 150 meters long have allegedly been completed, in which facilities for the production of poison gas will be installed. Above these tunnels, there are two 500-meter long construction sites that are not airfields, according to satellite monitors. U.S., French, Russian, and Chinese satellites have made numerous photos of the terrain near Tarhuna in recent weeks. At the international chemical weapons conference in Paris in January, Libya refused to sign a UN convention banning conventional weapons.

According to Western security circles, the poison gas factory near Tarhuna will not start production before 1995. The Libyans claim that the tunnels form part of the "great river," a 25 billion-dollar prestige project of al-Qadhdhafi for the artificial irrigation of the coastal region with ground water from the Sahara. In this mammoth project, which al-Qadhdhafi has praised as the "eighth wonder of the world," ground water from the Sahara will be taken to the coast through two water pipelines that together are 1,900 kilometers long. Part of this project in the east of the country has already been

completed, whereas the construction of the western pipeline—not far from Tarhuna—will not be begun before the middle of this year.

Ventilation Technology From Switzerland

The know-how for the construction of the tunnels of the new water pipeline will be supplied by the Salzburg-based engineering firm Sauer, which will get the commission one of these days. However, the owner of this firm said that until last Thursday [11 March], he did not know that the Libyans had also used his planning documents and his know-how, which he had submitted to Tripoli, for the construction of the tunnel systems for the new poison gas factory. Sauer told this newspaper: "My developments in tunnel construction are publicly accessible and are contained in many relevant publications." Therefore, he could not prevent them from being used for the construction of military facilities, he said. However, two Swiss firms have apparently been ready to cooperate directly with Libya. According to U.S. security circles, the expensive separate air admission and air discharge systems of the tunnels in Tarhuna should also have given the Swiss engineers a "clear" indication that a chemical facility was being built. Security circles claim that besides the ventilation system, another Swiss company that has close relations with the Bank of Credit and Commerce (BCCI), which broke down following several scandals, supplied "decontamination products," safety systems and highly sophisticated alarm systems to Libya through a business partner in Asia.

As in the case of the first Libyan poison gas factory in al-Rabitah, most components for setting up the facility were, however, largely supplied through four firms in Thailand and two sham addresses in Singapore and Hong Kong. The firm W & M Limited in Chiang Mai, Thailand, also dragged a German company into the construction of the new poison gas factory—without the latter's knowledge. The Luenen-based Westfalia-Becorit Industrietechnik GmbH [Industrial Engineering Limited] supplied two tunnel cutting machines to Libya through W & M Limited, which are now being used for the construction of the tunnels for the poison gas factory. This case demonstrates the covert way in which the Libyans proceed in their attempt to obtain Western high technology for military projects.

On 18 May 1990, W & M Limited contacted Westfalia-Becorit by telex for the first time, requesting a bid for the supply of partial cutting machines that are used in mining for underground tracks. Asked by the German company where and for what purpose the machines would be used, S. Wirote, the chief of the Thai company, said: "The machines will be used in Libya for the construction of road tunnels, width 9 meters, height 6 meters, three tunnels with individual lengths of 200-300 meters. It is sandstone with plaster intercalations, compression strength 50-80 Megapascal with quartz intercalations of less than 25 percent." Westfalia-Becorit executive Conrad told this newspaper: "These profiles presented by the Thais are the usual dimensions for

two-lane road construction; therefore, there is no reason to be suspicious." The contract for a partial cutting machine of the WAV-170 type of a total order value of approximately 2 million German marks [DM] was signed on 19 September 1990. In August 1991, the German company, which was founded in 1826, also supplied a cutting loader of the Luchs-H type for DM1.5 million through the Thai firm, which had meanwhile become its business partner for Asia and Libya. With such a cutting loader, tunnels 7.20 meters high and up to 6.70 meters wide can be cut out of the rock. The customs documents for both shipments, which were not prohibited under German law, duly gave Libya as the destination. The Thais were responsible for putting the facility into operation and for taking over the service. The German customs authorities became suspicious in connection with a shipment of replacement parts last year. Since then, the public prosecutors in Bochum have investigated the company, which was suspected of having violated the Foreign Trade and Payments Law, because the products supplied could be used not only for civilian, but also for military purposes. The investigating prosecutor, Bieniossek, told this newspaper: "According to the information we have obtained, there are no indications that the responsible people in the firm knew the real purpose for which the machines were to be used. On this basis, we intend to drop the proceedings."

Since August last year, the Libyan government has tried, through sham firms abroad, to win over Westfalia-Becorit for supplying replacement parts. On 19 November last year, the firm Maral, which is based in La Valetta, Malta, ordered replacement parts from Westfalia-Becorit in Luenen by telex—without success. The management in Luenen believes that the Libyans were behind this order. However, since then, Westfalia-Becorit has stopped supplying machinery without a written statement that its machines are not used for military purposes. W & M, which is headed by Thai manager Wirete, and in which geologist Apiwon is another leading executive, has continued efforts to buy another tunnel cutting machine built by Westfalia-Becorit, because according to security circles, the Libyans want to accelerate the construction of the new poison gas facility.

Ventilating Fans From Germany

Even though the public prosecutors will not carry out investigations in this case, the United States has mentioned the names of two other German companies in connection with the construction of the new poison gas factory in Libya. The Essen-based firm Turbofilter GmbH supplied a dedusting machine for the tunnel cutting machine built by Westfalia-Becorit at a price of DM180,000; in the same connection, the firm Korfmann in Witten, which has been an important supplier in the mining sector for more than 100 years, twice supplied two ventilating fans for DM100,000 each. In connection with the second poison gas factory, the public prosecutors believe that—unlike many other European firms—no German company knew that its products were intended for the construction of another

poison gas factory. The management of the Association of the German Engineering Industry in Frankfurt, representing about 3,000 German engineers, states: "Many German firms are seeing export control problems in connection with Libya. German companies are trying, in particular after Al-Rabitah, not to get involved in critical projects." Nonetheless, the help given unknowingly by Westfalia-Becorit will have consequences. According to information obtained by this newspaper, the Federal Government intends, before the end of this month, to include in the export list machines to create underground cavities that are intended for Libya. Such machines would then be subject to approval, irrespective of their purpose. In that case, not even dredgers can be supplied to Libya—something that is permitted in all other European countries.

Monthly Salary of DM15,000

The first Libyan poison gas factory in al-Rabitah, which was built with the help of German companies, was partly destroyed by fire in March 1990. Washington claimed that the fire was an "attempt by the Libyans to cover something up." According to U.S. intelligence information, more than 100 tonnes of the nerve gas Sarin and other chemical agents have meanwhile been produced in the al-Rabitah facility, which was reestablished; they are put into grenades and warheads. Libya claims, however, that the facility in al-Rabitah is a pharmaceutical factory. Under the management of a British expert, several dozen engineers from Denmark, Austria, Italy, and Poland allegedly work in the al-Rabitah factory. The British weekly THE SUNDAY TIMES published last year the names of the engineers working there; apart from gifts—such as vehicles—they get a monthly salary of about DM15,000 net. Three former executives of the Imhausen chemical company in Lahr had been sentenced to prison terms of between 12 and 20 months because they were involved in planning and building the al-Rabitah poison gas factory in the years 1984 to 1988 and had thereby violated the Foreign Trade and Payments Law.

Al-Qadhdhafi Discusses Oil Revenue Distribution

LD1603201593 Tripoli JANA in English 1631 GMT
16 Mar 93

[Text] Tripoli, Al-Rabie [March] 16, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—The leader of the revolution stressed that the distribution of oil revenues for the Libyans has to be accompanied by a rational policy that determines the ways of investing oil revenues in such a way that the revenues should not be spent on consumer items.

In this respect the leader stated that his previous announcement which came in his speech to the General People's Congress on the 18/11/1992 aims ultimately at raising the standard of living of Libyan families which have to invest their share of oil wealth. He indicated that there were three possible areas for investment i.e. individual, collective and national.

During his meeting with the experts of economy and oil in the Great Jamahiriyyah yesterday the leader of the revolution stressed the need to start investment immediately in the projects that lie within the framework of the strategic economic planning for the creation of the future.

Morocco

'Arafat Arrives in Rabat for Visit

Airport Statement

LD1603195493 Rabat Moroccan Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Excerpts] Yasir 'Arafat, president of the State of Palestine, arrived in Rabat this afternoon on a visit to Morocco. [passage omitted]

At the airport, 'Arafat made a statement on the purpose of this visit and said:

[Begin 'Arafat recording] I am really pleased to come to this fraternal country, which gives me the opportunity to meet His Majesty King Hassan II and to listen to his views and advice in these difficult, important, and fateful moments through which the Palestinian issue, in particular, and the Arab question, in general, are passing.

This visit comes after the important developments taking place in our Arab region, including the visit of Secretary of State Christopher and the invitation addressed to the Arab parties to attend the bilateral and multilateral negotiations. Also, it comes after the talks that took place between President Clinton and Rabin, particularly that they covered—as announced through the news conference they held yesterday—the peace issue in the Middle East. [end recording]

On the conditions for peace in the Middle East, Mr. 'Arafat said:

[Begin 'Arafat recording] I would like to say clearly and basically—here on the land of fraternal Morocco—that peace is achieved through the achievement of the national, political, and legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, in accordance with international legality and the implementation of all the UN Resolutions—242, 338, 799—and the achievement of land for peace and Holy Jerusalem.

I repeat Holy Jerusalem here because it is the core and the cornerstone as far as we are concerned, particularly in that there are Israeli and non-Israeli attempts to exclude Holy Jerusalem from the talks. I will say that this stance is not only the Palestinian one, but is also a Palestinian, Arab, Muslim, and Christian stance.

We are not asking for the impossible, but we are calling for the implementation of all the UN resolutions and for international legality, as well as the implementation of human rights in accordance with the fourth Geneva convention and also the international protection of the Palestinian people who are facing organized Israeli official terrorism against our children and women, and Islamic and Christian sanctities. We are naturally concerned with peace, but peace based on justice, on international legality, and on the UN resolutions and not on the surrender that Rabin calls for. Rabin talks about peace but his army practices war actions with all its crimes against our people, children, sanctities, women, and land. [end recording]

The Palestinian president is accompanied on this visit by an important delegation consisting of Mr. Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas], member of the PLO Executive Committee and member of the Central Committee of the Fatah movement, Mr. Hakam Bal'awi, member of the Central Committee of the Fatah movement, and Faysal al-Husayni, chairman of the steering committee of the Palestinian delegation to the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations.

King Receives 'Arafat

LD1603224893 Rabat RTM Television Network in Arabic 2030 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Excerpt] His Majesty King Hassan II received this evening His Excellency Mr. Yasir 'Arafat, president of the state of Palestine, in the El-Diafa Palace in Rabat. Mr. Yasir Arafat. President Arafat was accompanied, during this audience, by Mr. Abu-Mazin, PLO Executive Committee member and member of the Fatah Central Committee; Mr. Hakam Bal'awi, member of the Fatah Central Committee; Mr. Faysal al-Husayni, chairman of the Guidance Committee of the Palestinian delegation to the peace negotiations of the Middle East; and Mr. Abu-Marwan, ambassador of the State of Palestine to Morocco. The audience was attended by Mr.s Abdellatif Filali, minister of state in charge of foreign relations and cooperation; and his majesty's advisers Ahmed Rida Guidera and Ahmed Ben Souda. [passage omitted]

Second Meeting With King

*LD1703101893 Rabat Moroccan Kingdom Radio
Network in Arabic 0700 GMT 17 Mar 93*

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] His Majesty King Hassan II yesterday evening received His Excellency Yasir 'Arafat, president of the state of Palestine, for the second time at the Royal Court. This meeting was attended on the Palestinian side by the delegation accompanying His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat, and on the Moroccan side by Prime Minister Mohamed Karim Lamrani, Minister of State for Foreign Relations and Cooperations Abdellatif Filali, and his majesty's advisers Ahmed Reda Guedera and Ahmed Ben Souda.

At the end of this meeting, His Majesty bade farewell to his honorable guest, His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat, president of the state of Palestine.

'Important Changes' in Security Command After Tabet Case

*LD1703093693 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic
0800 GMT 17 Mar 93*

[Text] The Moroccan paper AL-BAYANE disclosed in its issue published today that important changes have taken place to the pyramid command structure of Moroccan national security. According to the newspaper, these changes are connected with the dangerous moral scandal in which Mohamed Mustapha Tabet, a second officer in the Moroccan police, was implicated. This latter person was sentenced to death last Monday.

Kuwait**Bomb Explosions, Hearings Into Iraqi Aggression***PM1603124993 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 14 Mar 93 p 1*

[Muhammad al-Damyan, Mahbub al-'Abdallah, and Nasir al-Mutayri report: "Three New Explosions Rock Kuwait"]

[Excerpts] Kuwait—The evening before last Kuwait witnessed another night of big explosions. Accusing fingers were immediately pointed at what security sources called a "fifth column" left behind by the Iraqi invasion.

Security sources said that the explosions occurred almost at the same time, but there were no casualties or heavy material losses. They said the first and second explosions occurred in the garden of the Holiday Inn hotel in the al-Farwaniyah area on the airport road, and third near the communication tower in the Jalib al-Shuyukh area.

A Kuwaiti Interior Ministry spokesman said that competent organs began their investigations immediately to identify the culprits and unravel the clues to what happened. [passage omitted]

Meanwhile, Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, Kuwaiti first deputy prime minister and foreign minister, has revealed that political leaflets were found in the Kuwaiti Embassy in Beirut after the explosion which targeted it last week.

Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad said that these leaflets reveal the involvement of two armed organizations not announced in connection with the incident before. [passage omitted]

At another level, Shaykh 'Ali al-Khalifah al-Sabah, former Kuwaiti oil and finance minister, yesterday appeared before the fact-finding committee looking into the circumstances of the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait. He emerged after a session, which lasted four and a half hours, to say: "We are brothers and discussing our country's future by examining the lessons of the past to learn from them in the future."

Answering a question put to him by AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, Shaykh 'Ali al-Khalifah said that the committee listened to him as a former oil minister, not as a former finance minister. And he emphasized that he had spoken about the protest memorandum which Iraq submitted to the Arab League two weeks before its aggression against Kuwait.

Shaykh 'Ali al-Khalifah stressed that he felt no sensitivity or annoyance at the decision to call him to appear before the committee to listen to his opinion concerning the background to the Iraqi aggression. He said that he will complete his discussions with the committee members at another meeting to be held next Saturday. He emphasized his willingness to cooperate limitlessly for the sake of serving the homeland.

He pointed out that the fact-finding committee raised the issue of Iraq's accusation that Kuwait had stolen its oil and thus hastened the Iraqi aggression, so he replied that these accusations are absurd. He said that they were not discussed for long.

*** Officials Speculate on Causes of Explosions***93P50101 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 10 Mar 93 p 1*

[Report by Muhammad al-Damyan]

[Text] Kuwait—Kuwait was rocked at dawn yesterday by a large explosion aimed at one of the audiotape stores in the area of Khitan, causing massive damage but not loss of life.

A security source told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that the incident was "an act of sabotage and aggression" and indicated that the concerned security agencies had begun their investigations to determine who was behind it.

The commander of the Khitan area, Colonel Shamruk al-Nasim, said that the explosion is one of a series of explosions that have occurred in Kuwait recently and have been charged to an unknown person. He indicated that the preliminary investigations point to the explosion being due to a time bomb.

It should be mentioned that a similar explosion destroyed another audiotape and videotape merchant's outlet in the same area Thursday, causing great material loss.

Similar targets have suffered explosions during the last few months. An explosive charge went off near a Russian circus that was visiting the national fairgrounds in the Mushrif area. Fundamentalist groups were blamed in this incident, but they denied it.

The Kuwaiti security authorities recently arrested individuals believed to be connected with the incident that took place in the al-Yarmuk area and that targeted the residence of the medical college dean, Dr. Hilal al-Sayir. At that time, a security source said that investigations had disclosed that Iraqi intelligence agencies were involved in this operation, the goal of which was to cause discord among Kuwaitis.

*** Assembly Summons Chief of Staff, Oil Minister***93P50102A London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 12 Mar 93 pp 1, 4*

[Text] Kuwait—"Resigned" Kuwaiti Chief of Staff Shaykh Jabir al-Khalid al-Sabah did not respond to the call by the parliamentary fact-finding committee on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait to appear before it yesterday.

Kuwaiti Defense Minister Shaykh 'Ali al-Sabah said in a message addressed to the committee that the chief of staff would be prevented from appearing before it "because he is experiencing special circumstances," but

he did not disclose the nature of these circumstances. However, the deputy chairman of the National Assembly and chairman of the committee, Salih al-Fidalah, affirmed to AL-HAYAH that Shaykh Jabir al-Khalid will appear before the committee on Thursday, indicating that the official summons must be sent to him again by way of the defense minister because he is still responsible for the chief of staff, whose resignation has not been completed.

Al-Fidalah welcomed the statements of former Oil Minister Shaykh 'Ali al-Khalifah al-Sabah, who announced that he would attend the investigation tomorrow morning, Saturday. He stated his readiness to cooperate with the committee to the fullest to uncover the conditions surrounding [the invasion].

It should be mentioned that Shaykh 'Ali al-Khalifah returned to Kuwait yesterday, Thursday, after a sudden two-day trip to London in the company of his mother, who is suffering from ill health. The chairman of the Assembly said: "The committee will listen to the minister on many matters, because the conflict over oil policy was one of the Iraqis' justifications for the invasion."

* Committee Questions al-Khalifah on Invasion

93AE0383A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic
9 Mar 93 p 1

[Article by Nasir al-Mutayri: "Fact-finding Committee Requests Testimony by 'Ali al-Khalifah; al-Fidalah Refers to Oil Background in Iraqi Aggression"]

[Text] Kuwait—In a sudden and interesting step, the Kuwaiti National Assembly's fact-finding committee has decided to summon former Oil and Finance Minister Shaykh 'Ali al-Khalifah al-Sabah to appear before it to give his testimony on the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait. In an exclusive statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, Deputy Salih al-Fidalah, the committee chairman and National Assembly deputy speaker, has said that the committee's role continues to be confined at present to "investigating thoroughly the true nature of what happened on 2 August 1990."

Al-Fidalah stressed that the decision to summon Shaykh 'Ali al-Khalifah to appear before the committee is because "he was the oil minister one month before the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait." Al-Fidalah expressed the belief that the "crisis that developed between Kuwait and Iraq in May 1990 was fundamentally because of oil."

Shaykh 'Ali al-Khalifah al-Sabah is the third member of al-Sabah family to be summoned to appear before the fact-finding committee emanating from the National Assembly. The committee heard the testimony of former Defense Minister Shaykh Nawwaf al-Ahmad al-Sabah last month, and it will hear the testimony of Major General Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah, the army general chief of staff, in two days. It is to be noted that Maj. Gen. Jabir al-Sabah has tendered his resignation as

chief of staff in the face of rising accusations charging him with "failure to confront the aggression."

Moreover, Major General Farid al-Sani', a former army general chief of staff, appeared before the committee yesterday and talked at length on the Kuwaiti military agency's performance prior to, during, and after the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait. Al-Fidalah said that al-Sani' has clarified numerous points that had remained vague and that he has agreed to appear before another committee meeting to be held at a later time.

To date, the fact-finding Committee entrusted with examining the background of the Iraqi aggression has held 15 meetings in which it has heard the testimony of a large number of military and civilian officials. It is expected to summon other figures to appear testify before it drafts its final report and submits it to the National Assembly.

* Government Steps Up Efforts on Captives Issue

93AE0383B London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic
9 Mar 93 p 5

[Article by Muhammad al-Damyan in Kuwait and AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT Bureau in Cairo: "Serious Arab Effort To End Captives' Crisis Prior to League Council Meeting in April"]

[Text] The Arab League will launch serious efforts to gain the release of the Kuwaiti captives detained in Iraq before the League Council convenes its new session at the level of foreign ministers next April.

Informed sources have said that Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Isamat 'Abd-al-Majid has asked Nabil Najm, Iraq's permanent Arab League delegate, for prompt responses from the Iraqi Government on developments of the captives issue. 'Abd-al-Majid has also underlined the need for Arab commitment to solving the Kuwaiti captives' crisis, noting that their continued detention is tantamount to an Iraqi violation of human rights rules. The sources pointed out that the effort to solve the captives crisis falls within the framework of Kuwaiti files that have been delivered to the Red Cross and the Arab League's General Secretariat.

In a related development, Arab sources noted that the league secretary general has given 'Abd-al-Muhsin Nasir al-Ji'an, Kuwait's permanent Arab League delegate, assurances that the league will step up its efforts to end the prisoner issue, which is a subject of dispute with Iraq.

The league secretary general recently received 6,000 letters from Arab citizens demanding an end to the crisis of the captives in Iraq. Jasim al-'Awn, Kuwait's justice and social affairs minister, who visited Cairo to attend meetings of the ministerial committee concerned with rebuilding Lebanon's sports installations, met with 'Abd-al-Majid and urged him to exert maximum efforts to

release the Kuwaiti captives. Al-'Awn has emphasized that the league is performing an effective role in this regard.

Moreover, Shaykh Salim al-Sabah, chairman of the national committee for prisoner of war affairs, has expressed hope that the efforts being made by 'Abd-al-Majid will be crowned with good results.

In a statement to the KUWAIT NEWS AGENCY, Shaykh Salim al-Sabah said that the Arab League's attainment of an appropriate solution to the captives issue will strengthen confidence in the league's role in settling Arab issues.

Shaykh Salim added that through concerted contacts, his committee keeps in touch with the efforts being made by the Arab League secretary general on this issue. The shaykh also stressed that it is essential that the Iraqi regime implement all UN resolutions, especially those concerning the captives.

* Ruling Family Members To Testify on Invasion

93AE0383C London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
9 Mar 93 pp 1, 4

[Article: "Kuwait: Fact-finding Committee Summons Former Oil Minister; Four al-Sabah Family Members Testify on Invasion"]

[Text] Kuwait AL-HAYAH—The fact-finding committee of the Kuwaiti National Assembly has decided to summon former Finance and Oil Minister Shaykh 'Ali al-Khalifah al-Sabah to testify on the secrets behind the dispute that erupted between Kuwait and Iraq over oil in May 1990. Salih al-Fidalah, the committee chairman and National Assembly deputy speaker, said: "We only want to get to the facts."

Parliamentarians fear the possibility that Shaykh 'Ali al-Khalifah will refuse to appear before the committee on the initial summons. However, the committee is empowered, in case he persists in his refusal, to refer the matter to the public prosecutor so he can be summoned by force of law.

Al-Fidalah said that the committee Thursday will summon Shaykh Jabir al-Khalid al-Sabah, the chief of staff who has tendered his resignation, to hear his testimony. Al-Fidalah asserted that the committee "will send a letter to the defense minister to request Major General al-Sabah's presence, because no official decision has yet been made to accept his resignation and because he is considered an official of the ministry in this case."

Thus, a total of four ruling family members will answer to the parliamentary committee's call, which has been unanimously approved by both the legislative and the executive authorities.

Former chief of staff, Major General Mazid al-Sani', appeared before the committee members yesterday at an uninterrupted three-hour session in which an extensive

dialogue was held. Al-Sani' spoke at length about the phases preceding, accompanying, and following the Iraqi invasion of 2 August 1990.

Al-Fidalah pointed out that the committee was not content with this session and that it has decided to re-interview al-Sani'.

AL-HAYAH asked al-Fidalah about how the members felt at the session. He answered: "We are not talking about feelings, but about the response of the chief of staff to whom delicate questions were addressed. We have not reached the phase of holding anybody responsible for the catastrophe. We have been looking for missing links and information."

At another level, the government has responded positively to the report by the committee concerned with Kuwaiti hostages and captives in Iraqi prisons. The report calls for dismissing Shaykh Salim al-Sabah, chairman of the Kuwaiti National Committee for Prisoner of War Affairs and former foreign minister (the prime minister's cousin), and the current committee members. The committee has expressed its satisfaction with this decision. However, it has asserted that it is not in charge of forming a new committee, or even directly involved in it.

It should be noted that the committee was confronted with popular pressure and that the captives' families had demanded it be disbanded after it had failed to complete the files concerning their captured relatives.

Deputy 'Abd-al-Muhsin Jamal, the parliamentary committee's rapporteur, has said that the National Assembly will participate in the international parliamentary meeting which will convene in India to present the issue of captive Faysal al-Sabiq, a member of the 1985 National Assembly who is still missing since September 1990. A parliamentary delegation will also visit Paris and Brussels next week.

At a different level, the problem of veiled female students at Kuwait University's School of Medicine has worsened now that a delegation of university professors have expressed their displeasure with the National Assembly's determination to issue a law that requires the School of Medicine to admit veiled students.

Dr. Nasir Sarkhuh, the Education Committee chairman, has said that the "committee has decided to wait for a decision to be made by Education Minister Dr. Ahmad al-Rub'i, who is delivering currently messages from the ruler to a number of world leaders. Else, the assembly will be compelled to issue such a law."

It is to be noted that the home of Dr. Hilal al-Sayir, dean of the medical faculty, was subjected to two explosions last year after he expelled veiled students. It is believed that elements belonging to the Iraqi Ba'th Party are behind the two incidents, one of which claimed the life of an Iranian worker.

In another respect, the Assembly today will discuss a most conspicuous Kuwaiti problem connected with the foreign labor that has "invaded" the country since the liberation. Violations in the system of labor importation and the ease with which permits for residence in the country are transferred from one establishment to another have been exposed.

It is to be noted that Egyptian labor represents 25 percent of the workforce, and Indian labor represents 17 percent, despite the positions that were taken by India during the liberation, most of which were not compatible with the Kuwaiti Government's movements at the time. However, the cheap cost of importing this labor and the low salaries paid to the workers have been the main motive behind turning a "blind eye" to the matter.

Saudi Arabia

Government Reportedly Detains Islamic Jihad Leader

LD1603193793 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT
16 Mar 93

[Text] The Islamic Jihad Movement of Palestine, by issuing a statement yesterday, announced that the leader of this movement has been detained in Saudi Arabia. The Islamic Jihad warned the Saudi Arabian authorities of the consequences of their action and demanded the immediate release of the Islamic Jihad leader.

Troops, Large-Caliber Arms Reported Moved to 32d Parallel

NC1603160093 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1440 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] The tyrant regime's security and intelligence personnel in the past few days have begun wide-scale storming campaigns against the people living south of the 32d parallel, the exclusion zone beyond which the regime's aircraft are banned from flying.

This was confirmed by our sources inside Iraq, who added that extensive areas in al-Nasiriyah, al-'Amarah, [name indistinct], and al-Diwaniyah had witnessed these brutal practices. Hundreds of residents are being arrested by the regime and put in jails and detention camps, where they are subjected to the most abominable types of torture, often leading to immediate death.

According to our sources, regime Interior Minister Watban Ibrahim is personally supervising this campaign, which the regime calls the disciplinary campaign. He ordered his security officials and other personnel under his command to show no mercy with the inhabitants, particularly those living near the southern marshes. Other sources have reported that Watban Ibrahim travels twice a week to the southern governorates to plan, supervise, and take part in the repressive operations against the inhabitants and to order storming operations, executions, and expulsions against them. During the past few weeks, he dismissed and transferred a number of security officials in the area south of the 32d parallel.

In another development, eyewitnesses have told our sources that they have seen columns of regime troops heading south this month from Diyala, Baghdad, and al-Kut Governorates and taking up positions in areas on the 32d parallel. The troops carried large-caliber weapons, including artillery, surface-to-surface missiles, and surface-to-air missiles. Once in position, the weapons are intricately camouflaged. The same witnesses added that large numbers of the regime's infantry troops in the southern marshes have started wearing civilian clothes and carrying out raids against the remaining populated areas of the marshes in an attempt to eliminate or displace the residents.

Regime 'To Bring In' MKO to Kurdish Areas

NC1603172393 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1600 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] A source in Karkuk has reported that an armed revolutionary unit attacked one of the regime's police vehicles near the fourth bridge in Karkuk on the night of 9-10 March. Two policemen were killed and others injured. Their vehicle was burned. The regime arrested a number of citizens the next morning and took them to its dark prisons.

The same source said that the regime has evacuated Kurdish families from the towns of (Qarah Handi) and (Arkun Kubri) and that it has been reported that the

regime intends to bring in forces from the Iranian Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization [MKO] to set up camps in these areas to guard them.

Armed Forces Resume Attacks on Marshlands

LD1603194693 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] Iraq's Ba'thist forces have once again resumed their bestial attacks against the southern people of that country. The region's news sources, citing Iraqi regime's opponents, said today: The Ba'thist forces have started operations aimed at routing the people who live in the south of the country on the 32nd parallel—entry to which has been declared illegal by the UN—and have tortured and persecuted hundreds of innocent people in these districts.

Iranian Air Raid on Hospital in North 13 Mar

JN1603175893 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] Two French organizations have announced that Iranian fighter planes raided a hospital in the Raniyah area of northern Iraq on Saturday [13 March], killing and wounding several civilian Kurds.

The organizations International Medical Aid and Medicine for the World [names as heard], which manage the hospital, said in a statement carried by France-Inter Radio monitored in Baghdad today, that six Iranian planes bombarded the hospital, causing extensive material damage and killing and wounding scores of civilian Kurdish patients.

Arab League Informed of 11-12 Mar Allied Air Activity

JN1603201593 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] Iraq has informed the Arab League that U.S., British, and French aircraft, taking off from air bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, have continued to violate Iraqi airspace, thus posing serious threats to Iraq's security and sovereignty.

In a letter addressed to Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Isamat 'Abd-al-Majid yesterday, Iraq's permanent representative to the Arab League said that these aircraft continued on 11 and 12 March to violate Iraqi airspace, carrying out 70 hostile air sorties over Iraqi territory.

The Iraqi delegate attached to the letter a list detailing these violations, and requested that the letter be circulated among the Arab League member states so that they may be made aware of these regrettable incidents.

**Factory Damaged in 17 Jan Missile Strike
Reconstructed**

*JN1603182593 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1700 GMT
16 Mar 93*

[Excerpt] Baghdad, 16 Mar (INA)—It was announced today that the mujahidin of the Military Industrialization Organization have completed the reconstruction of the al-Nida' State Enterprise for Manufacturing Molds, Construction Works and Machines in record time, not exceeding 45 days. The enterprise is now operating even better than before.

This came in a cable His Excellency President Saddam Husayn received from Staff Lieutenant General Husayn Kamil Hasan, supervisor of industry and oil. In this cable, Lt. Gen. Husayn Kamil Hasan relayed to the leader president glad tidings pertaining to the completion of the reconstruction of al-Nida' Enterprise, which was the target of a barbaric U.S. missile strike on the night of 17 January 1993. In that savage strike, more than 35 missiles struck the enterprise. [passage omitted]

**FRY's General Panic Pays Working Visit to
Recover Debts**

*LD1603165993 Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service in
Serbo-Croatian 1518 GMT 16 Mar 93*

[Text] Baghdad, 16 March (TANJUG)—Colonel General Zivota Panic, chief of the Yugoslav Army's General Staff, is paying a working visit to Iraq.

As the Iraqi news agency INA has reported, he had a meeting with Iraqi Defense Minister 'Ali Hasan al-Majid last night. According to INA, during the talks General Panic particularly noted the importance of the need for the international community to get more involved in finding peaceful solutions to the Yugoslav crisis.

As TANJUG has learned, the purpose of General Panic's visit to Iraq is to recover debts which Iraq incurred when construction units of the former Yugoslav People's Army carried out work in that country.

Rabin Cutting Short U.S. Trip Due to Recent Terror Attacks

TA1603162093 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1544 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin is cutting short his visit to the United States and will return to Israel. Our political correspondent Natan Gutman, who accompanied the prime minister on his trip, is on the phone from Washington with the details:

[Gutman—live] Good afternoon from Washington. Just a minute ago it was officially reported that Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin had decided to return to Israel on Friday [19 March]. The prime minister is cutting short his visit to the United States by three days. The official reason given was that in light of the recent terrorist incidents in Israel, the prime minister preferred to shorten his visit and return to Israel before the weekend. Here is Gad Ben-Ari, the prime minister's media adviser, with the formal announcement.

[Ben-Ari—recorded] The prime minister has decided to return to Israel on Friday, after meeting with the U.S. President, senior Administration officials and leaders of Congress, the leaders of American Jewish organizations, and with UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali in New York. The prime minister said this morning that in light of the events in Israel he preferred to return home before the weekend.

[Gutman] It should be noted that due to the shortening of this visit, the prime minister will cancel his visit to Pascagoula, where he was scheduled to launch the first Saar-5 missile boat. He will also cancel his planned speech to AIPAC [American Israel Public Affairs Committee] in Washington.

Yesterday, when Prime Minister Rabin was asked whether he intended to cut short his visit, he replied that he saw no reason to do so, adding that he was here to promote the peace process which was the only solution to terrorism. Rabin's aides stressed that the prime minister was only canceling meetings that were not vital to the promotion of the political process.

Rabin Explains Early Return

TA1703054093 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Interview with Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin by Washington-based correspondent Arye Golan in Washington on 16 March—recorded]

[Text] [Rabin] I decided to wind up my trip before the designated time because, first of all, I will have achieved the main purpose of my visit: meeting with the President, his cabinet members, and congressmen, and the meetings I will hold on 18 March with Jewish community representatives and the UN secretary general. In view of developments in Israel, I thought we could pass the launching ceremony of the first Saar 5 vessel. There

is no activity on Saturday in any event, and the only thing scheduled for Sunday is an address before AIPAC [American Israel Public Affairs Committee]. I talked to the AIPAC people yesterday, and they practically told me they understood that I had to leave and that they were therefore ready to forgo the event.

My return is unconnected to the steps Israel has taken in an attempt to deal with the situation. I am aware of them; they were taken with my knowledge. I believe, however, that as prime minister and defense minister, and having completed the main objectives of my U.S. visit, I should return as soon as possible, forgoing a part of my trip, although I did want it to take place. In my view, that part is less important than the things I will have completed by Thursday night.

[Golan] To combat terror, will the cabinet hold additional operational debates or endorse operational resolutions on its Sunday meeting?

[Rabin] I repeat: Steps taken so far were made with my knowledge, and they are the steps that should have been made. It is not because of any need for additional steps that I am returning. I am returning because having completed my main mission here, I believe I should be in Israel.

Rabin-Peres Tension Denied

TA1703100593 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Deputy Defense Minister Mordekhay Gur says that the reports attributing the prime minister's decision to cut short his U.S. visit to renewed tension with Foreign Minister Peres are but idle gossip. Speaking to our correspondent Razi Barqay this morning, Deputy Minister Gur said that no specific reasons were behind the decision to cut the visit short. Gur added that Rabin has been in touch with Peres and with defense establishment heads throughout recent days and that all the defense-related decisions had been made with Rabin's knowledge.

In Mordekhay Gur's view, Rabin's decision to return home was prompted by the gut feeling of a prime minister who simply wanted to be at home during this difficult period.

Peres: Rabin 'Justified' in Early Return

TA1703113493 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1105 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Interview with Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres by political correspondent Shlomo Raz following state ceremony on 17 March commemorating the victims of terrorist attacks on the Buenos Aires and Ankara Embassies—recorded]

[Text] [Raz] Mr. Peres, did the prime minister do the right thing in deciding to return early, or has his decision created greater public anxiety?

[Peres] If we look at his remaining agenda, we will see that he was definitely justified in cutting the visit short. He did not have to give up anything very important, and anyway the storm prevented a Jewish convention at the beginning of his meeting.

[Raz] You have held several meetings in which several decisions pertaining to domestic security were made. Were all these issues coordinated with the prime minister?

[Peres] They certainly were. Contrary to what this or that newspaper says, everything was coordinated in advance.

[Raz] Mr. Peres, I would like to go back to a question you have already been asked: Were maps discussed at the private meeting between President Clinton and the prime minister?

[Peres] I repeat: To the best of my knowledge, there were no plans to discuss maps, and no maps were discussed.

[Raz] Speaking at today's ceremony, you said Israel knows who pulled the trigger, or rather, who placed the car bomb in Buenos Aires. Can you add details?

[Peres] My not naming the culpable parties was not accidental. I will not name them until the investigation is over.

[Raz] Will new steps addressing the condition of domestic security be taken?

[Peres] At this stage, we have to implement the measures on which we have decided, and we are doing just that.

Peres on Security, Peace Talks

TA1603181393 Tel Aviv Educational Television
Network in Hebrew 1500 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Interview with Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres, acting prime minister and defense minister, by Dan Shilon—live in the studio]

[Text] [Shilon] Let me ask you one question before we deal with the issue at hand: Would it not be right to call on Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, who is currently in Washington, to come home seeing that the security tasks are so weighty that the job of defense minister should be filled full time and not just partly?

[Peres] The peace process, too, is an issue of utmost importance. The meeting in Washington is very valuable and should be fully exhausted, even if it takes two or three more days.

[Shilon] We are talking about more than two or three days.

[Peres] We are talking about next Monday, about another three or four days, excluding Saturday. In my opinion, we must keep our cool and take simultaneous action in both spheres: peace and security.

[Shilon] With your permission, let me move on to the issue at hand. It was only a year ago that you talked about pulling out of Gaza first, and said we had no business in Gaza and no reason to hold onto it. Do you still subscribe to that view?

[Peres] I do, on two conditions: if it is possible and if it can be done through negotiation. We cannot negotiate and at the same time make decisions without negotiating. That would give an excuse to all those Palestinians who are opposed to negotiations. Therefore, the question of Gaza first had better be examined in the context of the negotiations.

[Shilon] Mr. Peres, you were quoted today as having spoken in favor of the police commissioner's recommendation to Israelis who have licenses to bear arms. Why?

[Peres] Because once this recommendation was made there should be no counter-recommendations. I only propose and ask Israelis who hold guns to respect the law and be very cautious in the use of arms, both vis-a-vis friend and foe. Such matters are usually controversial, and that is why there should be no conflicting instructions.

[Shilon] Would it be right to link the government's soft attitude toward internal security in the last few days and Yitzhaq Rabin's visit in Washington?

[Peres] No, it would not. New methods and waves of violence come and go. This time it is knives. As far as we know—I am not guessing—what makes knives proliferate is Israeli reaction. They are aroused by the feeling that Israelis are somewhat shaken, anxious, and confused, and this should not be. I definitely admit that at this point it is hard to come by an easy solution to fight off the knives. The reasons are simple: We have no advance intelligence because these are private initiatives, and we do not know of the existence of any headquarters issuing orders to carry out such attacks. In other words, these are usually spur-of-the-moment, private initiatives. The knives are aroused by our reaction. Therefore, our reaction must be sound and level-headed. I am not here to preach—the situation is very painful and grievous—but we have been through similar situations before and each time we found the appropriate solution. This time, too, we should deal with it with the same levelheadedness we evinced many times in the past, and under no circumstances whatsoever should we fall into despair.

[Shilon] Mr. Peres, does it not look strange to you that the Palestinian street is far more turbulent and violent now that there is a Labor-led government? On the face of it, the Palestinian street should have been calmer and more restrained because there is a government in power that wants—it has declared as much—to make peace and even agrees to territorial concessions.

[Peres] I think there were less disagreements among the Palestinians in the past because most of them thought peace was not imminent. Now that peace has become a tangible option these disagreements have taken the form

of violent confrontations. Disagreements exist both in Israel and on the Arab side. Whereas in Israel decisions are made through a vote, on the Arab side there is a minority who takes to arms and shoots indiscriminately at Arabs, Jews, the peace, and the peace negotiators.

The Palestinians must ultimately make up their mind whether they can lead their people because the negotiations arouse opposition, both on our side and theirs. Negotiations call for compromises and concessions, and not every proposal meets general approval, but this is where the negotiators are tested. The bullet, knife, or gun held by a minority should not be allowed to defeat the wishes of the majority and the need of the people to negotiate peace.

[Shilon] I would like to ask you another question about the negotiations with regard to Syria. We all watched the joint news conference held yesterday by Bill Clinton and Yitzhaq Rabin, but you probably know more than we do about what happened in the meeting. I would like to take you back to a statement you made a few days ago—I hope I am quoting you correctly—to the effect that the extent of the withdrawal or concession Israel will be prepared to make is in direct proportion to the extent of the peace Syria's al-Asad will give us. In other words, what you meant was: If he gives us full peace there will be a full withdrawal.

[Peres] No, I did not say that. I said that the extent of our withdrawal will be affected by the extent and the depth of the peace.

[Shilon] But will not be in direct proportion.

[Peres] It will not be in direct proportion. Talking about a direct proportion would be wrong because it would mean jumping ahead of the negotiations currently under way. At this stage, Mr. Rabin and all of us want to hear an explicit statement from Syrian leader al-Asad about what he means by peace. This is not a rhetorical question. Al-Asad has said he believes there is a kind of peace which does not call for the establishment of embassies or the opening of borders. Moreover, he told the Americans he came to the negotiations because Israel accepted UN Resolution 242. He gave a bizarre interpretation of Resolution 242, saying that it calls for a withdrawal but does not call for peace. Some things are obvious, and that is why we insist on hearing from al-Asad that his declaration about peace is not just some idle noncommittal statement or generalization. First of all we want to know that this would be a real peace. In exchange for real peace we will effect a real withdrawal.

[Shilon] Mr. Peres, thank you very much.

Shamir on Rabin-Clinton Meeting

TA1603133193 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1005
GMT 16 Mar 93

[Interview with Likud Chairman Yitzhaq Shamir by Rafi Reshef on the "It's All Talk" program—live]

[Excerpt] [Reshef] Good day to you, Knesset Member [MK] Yitzhaq Shamir.

[Shamir] Good day to you too.

[Reshef] Judging by your extensive experience, what is the significance of yesterday's news conference at the White House?

[Shamir] Look, we can learn what we have always learned from such news conferences, that there are undoubtedly good relations between the United States and Israel. This is a continued ongoing relationship—except for certain snafus which occurred both in my days as prime minister and in during Rabin's first term in office a long time ago. There was also talk regarding some recompense which the United States should give Israel in exchange for territorial concessions it is planning to implement. This is what I could learn. I hope that the United States is not crazy or zealous for increasing its influence in the Middle East and is not overly enthusiastic for involvement in the upcoming negotiations between Israel and the Arabs. Naturally, if the Israelis exert strong pressure on the United States to assist in bringing about Israeli concessions toward the Arabs—well, the Americans have always been inclined in that direction.

[Reshef] Does the news conference itself constitute a gesture on the part of Bill Clinton toward Israel.

[Shamir] There have always been such news conferences and gestures, and the atmosphere has almost always been good. Clinton has good reasons to implement such gestures. After all, U.S. Jewry has delivered him a generous advance payment—their very feeling that Clinton will constitute a better President than his predecessor constitutes such a payment.

[Reshef] Do you believe that Bill Clinton is on the whole a more convenient partner than was George Bush.

[Shamir] I certainly think so.

[Reshef] What are the practical ramifications of this conviction?

[Shamir] Let me reiterate that things depend mainly on us, rather than on the Americans. Here I differ from Rabin, who believes that the key lies in Washington. Things depend on us, and today the United States willingly accepts the fact that regional disputes be settled on a regional basis.

[Reshef] From your present perspective, can you say that the Americans really constitute an honest broker [two last words in English]?

[Shamir] This remains to be seen. Perhaps we will manage to spoil them yet.

[Reshef] How?

[Shamir] I must say that in my days they acted as honest brokers. From Madrid until the elections they were honest brokers.

[Reshef] How can we spoil them?

[Shamir] By asking them not to adhere to the principles determined in Madrid.

[Reshef] Are you saying, then, that without such an Israeli request there will not be such a U.S. initiative?

[Shamir] I do not think so, especially if Israel guards its interests.

[Reshef] Mr. Shamir, do you think that Yitzhaq Rabin is going to concede all the territories?

[Shamir] This is what he is saying, even though it is hard for me to believe so, because he has not always held this view. Today, however, he is saying both implicitly and explicitly that he is going to concede the territories.

[Reshef] But he has only said so implicitly, he never said he will concede all of the territories.

[Shamir] So let us say it was only said implicitly. You know what, if he will refrain from this I will be only to happy to admit my mistake. If he will not give up the Golan Heights, Judaea and Samaria I will be willing to give him the honor due to a king. [passage omitted]

All Objectives of Visit Met

TA1703061693 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Report by Washington-based correspondent Arye Golan]

[Text] All three objectives of Rabin's U.S. visit have been met, Rabin's aides said. Good personal relations have been established with President Clinton, who spoke more than once of the unique U.S.-Israeli ties and the upgrading of strategic ties between the two countries. This is a very friendly administration, members of the prime minister's entourage said, which wants to work closely with us as a full partner of a kind acceptable to us.

The President's promise to maintain the level of aid to Israel was yesterday endorsed by a congressional committee chairman—and that is no mean feat for an administration bound on slashing budgets and shutting down military bases. The President has also promised to assist personally in the struggle against Arab boycott.

Yesterday Rabin held another meeting with Secretary of State Warren Christopher. The deportee issue was raised, but—we have learned—only very marginally.

It is now plain that the United States will be involved in the peace talks, improving the chances of attaining accords, authoritative Israeli sources said. In this sense, the prime minister's visit and his meeting with Clinton have brought us closer to an accord than we were several

weeks ago. We feel at utmost ease both with Christopher and Lake, the national security adviser, despite the sentiments of unease and uncertainty that prevailed when they were appointed, elements in Rabin's entourage said.

And now, with the completion of the prime minister's visit to Washington, both the United States and Israel would like the peace talks due to resume on 20 April, after a four-month interval, to embark on a path of substantive progress. Israel is prepared for that; the United States is willing to be of assistance. The ball is now in the Arab court.

No New Ideas in Clinton Meeting

TA1703122493 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew
17 Mar 93 pp A1, A8

[Report by 'Aqiva Eldar, Ori Nir, and Menahem Horowitz]

[Excerpts] The heads of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks will be invited to Washington next week for talks with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher. This was reported to Jerusalem yesterday by reliable sources. The meeting will be held several days prior to the convention of Arab foreign ministers in Damascus, scheduled for the end of the month.

Political sources believe that the meeting was called to soften up the Palestinian leadership before the summit in Syria and to guarantee that all the Arab parties will attend the ninth round of talks in Washington on 20 April. U.S. officials told members of Prime Minister Rabin's entourage that there was still a great deal of doubt regarding the participation of all the Arab parties at the next round of talks. Foreign Ministry officials yesterday expressed amazement at the fact that Rabin's entourage has not sent any reports of the prime minister's meetings. Rabin has so far been content to brief Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres over the telephone. [passage omitted]

A senior source in the prime minister's entourage, speaking to Israeli correspondents last night, said that in all Rabin's meetings with leading Administration officials—including yesterday's meetings with Secretary of State Christopher and his advisers on the peace process—the prime minister had not raised even one new idea to promote the talks on the Syrian or Palestinian tracks. The Israeli official nevertheless hinted that such ideas could be raised during the preparatory talks between lower-ranking officials that will be held in Washington at the beginning of next month prior to the convening of the next round of bilateral negotiations. [passage omitted]

Despite the high expectations expressed by senior U.S. officials on the eve of the prime minister's arrival in Washington, who expected Rabin to bring new ideas to facilitate progress in the negotiations with the Palestinians, high-level sources in Rabin's entourage insisted

that the administration leaders had not sought to hear any such ideas or initiatives from the prime minister, and that Rabin, therefore, had not raised such proposals. The sources in Rabin's entourage asserted that such ideas are not discussed at the most senior levels, but rather at the "working group" level. They said that the talks between Rabin and U.S. leaders on the peace process had been limited to the "conceptual level" and did not touch on specific details. [passage omitted]

[Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew on 17 March in a page 5 report from Washington by Shim'on Schiffer and Ron Ben-Yishay adds: "Our correspondent was told by U.S. sources that in its talks with Palestinian leaders, the U.S. Administration will make concrete proposals designed to bridge the gaps between Israel and the Palestinians regarding the nature of self-government that will be granted to the residents of the territories." The paper goes on to note that in yesterday's meeting between Prime Minister Rabin and Secretary of State Christopher, "the two men agreed that Israel would soon publish a commitment from the highest political levels to reach a permanent solution with the Palestinians and not try to prolong the interim accords for an indefinite period. It was also agreed that Israel would not oppose a certain change in the composition of the Palestinian delegation, which would guarantee the representation of Palestinians residing in East Jerusalem. Mr. Christopher's meetings with Rabin was also designed to extract another promise: a compromise or concession on the deportee affair. This in order to enable the Americans to convince the Palestinians to rejoin the negotiations in Washington on 20 April. In the assessment of reliable sources, Christopher expected to receive a promise from Rabin that Israel would not carry out deportations in future; however, such a promise was not given."]

'Well-Founded' Information Says Iran Behind 1992 Embassy Blast

TA1703123193 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Well-founded information received by Israel indicates that Iran is responsible for the explosion at the Israeli Embassy in Argentina about a year ago. Nine embassy employees and five local inhabitants were killed in the blast.

Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres confirmed that Israel knows who is responsible for the explosion but refused to divulge details. The foreign minister was speaking at a commemorative ceremony held at the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem for the fatalities of that explosion and of the attack on the Israeli Embassy in Ankara a year ago, in which an embassy security officer was killed.

Peres Backs Call for Citizens To Bear Arms

TA1603125393 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1230 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] Shim'on Peres, acting prime minister and foreign minister, has called on Israeli citizens to follow the recommendations of the police commissioner and carry their personal weapons. Mr. Peres added that in consultations held today with security officials, it was decided to reinforce police and military deployment, as well as that of Civil Guard volunteers, prior to the weekend.

Call to Arms Considered Inappropriate

TA1603135993 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 16 Mar 93 p B1

[Commentary by Yo'el Marcus: "Guns and Gas Masks"]

[Text] The call on Israel's citizens to carry their guns at all times and everywhere is reminiscent of the decision to distribute gas masks on the eve of the Gulf war. In making both decisions, the authorities seem to be evading their responsibilities. Through them, the government and/or the defense authorities seem to be admitting that, in fact, they do not have answers for the threats on the public. Hence, take your guns and defend yourselves—every man for himself!

Luckily, you cannot shoot with a gas mask. But the thought that 250,000 citizens will be carrying loaded guns, in addition to the thousands that are already carrying mace and knives, should make us all shiver. Being hot-tempered as we are, with the Arabs working here and the numerous fine Jews who look Middle Eastern—including this author—how long will it take before we begin shooting each other? This is a nightmare that must not be allowed to become real.

Minister Ora Namir, shocked by the police call to carry guns, says we will become the Wild West. She is wrong: The Wild West is already here, even before hundreds of thousands Israelis hit the streets with guns hanging in their holsters. The fact that the game "Let Us Kill A Jew Today" has become the "in thing" in the territories has turned us all into sitting ducks, targeted by gunmen, and knife-and-ax-wielding Arabs.

Apparently citing sources very close to the prime minister, YEDI'OT AHARONOT's Shim'on Schiffer, accompanying Rabin on his U.S. visit, reports that Yitzhaq Rabin took the news very hard that serviceman Yehoshu'a Friedberg's body was found. "Sitting in his limousine, Rabin seemed silent, pensive, and hurt." Schiffer goes on to report that when Rabin received the news about the murder of Simha Levi [axed to death in the Gaza Strip], "the mood became intolerable—the feeling was one of embarrassment and perhaps also helplessness." This description supports the impression that the government is late in seeing things as they are, failing to realize that terror has gone up a step. Hence, it is late in taking the steps required to protect its citizens.

And the sheriff settles for giving advice: Drink water. Take your guns out of your safes.

One may appreciate Rabin's sensitivity, but his "silent, pensive, and hurt" mood is perhaps part of the problem; it certainly is no solution. A defense minister should hurt, but he should mostly act. And I more than just suspect that the government has never held an in-depth discussion on how to deal with terror. The decision to deport the 415 Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] activists did not come in wake of a thorough discussion, nor was it made as a part of a long-range strategic concept. It was a twitch of uncontrolled anger. It is a fact that since it was carried out, terror intensified. In 1993 alone, there were 15 murderous terror attacks that resulted in 10 fatalities and 22 wounded; nine of the attacks were perpetrated last week. This proves that the government should act with more serious consideration, and shoot from the hip less often.

There is no doubt that we are facing a new situation in our relations with the residents of the territories. The intifadah as a spontaneous and popular movement has died out. It has been replaced by well trained, compartmentalized, motivated, and resourceful terror squads which try to follow our method of operation and "move the war into the enemy's territory." It is very easy to advise the Israeli public to "grit its teeth until this wave of terror passes," as Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer has. But, how does he know the wave will pass? It is also very easy to say that terror attacks will continue until a political solution is found, as the chief of staff is saying. Again, the question is: How can he be certain that a political solution would put an end to terror perpetrated by those opposing a political solution? The truth is that the public is slightly hysterical, and that its leaders are not far behind in making diversified calls "to set up militias," "to pull out of Gaza immediately," "to dissolve the Knesset," "to send tanks into the territories," and so on. This state of affairs is intolerable and should not be accepted.

One of the basic roles of any government in every country is to provide each and every citizen with personal security. Although no one claims that armed friction between the two populations can be absolutely stopped at present, a situation in which the government and the defense authorities cannot provide more efficient solutions for the new state of affairs is unacceptable. On the political level, we are witnessing an absurd situation in which the Palestinians demand that we make gestures before they return to the negotiating table, instead of us notifying them that we will not report to the talks before terror stops. The Palestinians should be no less eager to reach an agreement than us—as long as there is an Israeli Government ready to make concessions. On the operational level, once terror went up a step, the government should upgrade its methods of fighting terrorism. There are certainly quite a few shelved means, and now is perhaps the time to take them.

If the government does not act, if there are no state-sponsored solutions, civilians will take the law into their hands. If this happens, anarchy is only a short way away.

Security Forces Discuss Stricter Measures in Territories

TA1703074093 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Report by army affairs correspondent Karmela Menashe]

[Text] The defense establishment and the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] are seeking ways to restore civilians' sense of security in the midst of one the worst outbursts of terrorism. The prevailing feeling is that Israel's power to deter Palestinian terror in the territories and in Israel has declined.

The defense establishment's recommendations focus on stricter observance of regulations governing Palestinians, with a special emphasis on the Gaza Strip.

In the framework of IDF debates on this issue, the chief of staff yesterday held a meeting at which the situation in the territories was assessed. Lieutenant General Barak instructed his staff to strive for maximum inspection at the Erez checkpoint—namely, to ensure that all the owners of magnetic passes crossing into Israel are inspected and that more crossing vehicles are checked.

On the orders of Lt. Gen. Barak, the IDF will buy 100 metal detectors to uncover knives and other weapons at the Erez checkpoint and at random roadblocks. In addition, several magnetic fences will be installed in the Gaza Strip.

It was further decided that troops sent to reinforce IDF deployment in the Strip in recent days will remain there for the time being. The areas of Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip will be reinforced with special units. The troops have been instructed to hunt wanted men implacably in cooperation with the Shin Bet. The Civil Administration, as well as the police, has been instructed to enforce the regulation that employers pick up Arab workers in specially designated places only.

Security sources have said that Lt. Gen. Barak, the chief of staff, maintains ongoing communication with Yitzhak Rabin, prime minister and defense minister, who is at present in the United States, while upper IDF echelons are in contact with Acting Prime Minister Shim'on Peres.

Army Units To Reinforce Police Forces Inside Green Line

TA1703122893 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 17 Mar 93 pp A1, A8

[Report by Eytan Rabin and Re'uven Shapira]

[Excerpts] Police forces within the Green Line will now be reinforced by Army units to maintain routine security and public order. IDF [Israel Defense Forces] units will be attached to the police for limited periods in all sensitive areas and settlements, if the police conclude that they require such reinforcements. [passage omitted]

The agreements on closer cooperation between the police and the IDF were formulated during top-level discussions that were held over the past few days as part of efforts to augment public safety within the Green Line. [passage omitted]

IDF soldiers also reinforce police units during calmer periods, mainly on days that are potential dates for terrorist attacks, such as holidays and "memorial days" of terrorist organizations, but on a far smaller scope. This time, however, police units will be significantly reinforced by Army troops in areas near the Green Line and in various settlements throughout the country. [passage omitted]

'Over 1000' Golan Druze Hold Pro-Syrian Demonstration

TA1603154893 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Excerpts] Over 1,000 Druze demonstrated this morning in the village of Buq'ata on the Golan Heights. They were protesting the fatal shooting of one of the villagers by a Qatzrin resident. The demonstrators shouted harsh epithets against Israel and chanted pro-Syrian slogans. Our correspondent Menahem Horowitz reports.

[Begin recording] [Horowitz] This afternoon, the village of Buq'ata hosted one of the largest demonstrations held on the northern part of the Golan Heights in recent years. Thousands of people sang nationalistic songs, waved Syrian flags, and shouted that the Golan Heights were part of Syria. [passage omitted]

The harsh sentiments expressed this afternoon in Buq'ata indicate that the Druze residents of the Golan Heights intend to exploit yesterday's shooting in Qatzrin in order to attack the Israeli Government and to express their support for the Syrian leadership. [passage omitted]

Israeli sources on the Golan Heights voiced the assessment that the Golan Druze are under great tension because of the political negotiations and the various media reports that Israel will agree to territorial concessions on the northern part of the Golan Heights. They estimated that similar demonstrations by Druze residents would also take place in the future. [end recording]

House Sealed in Khan Yunus; Strike in Golan Druze Villages

TA1603071293 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0500 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] The house of Imam Abu-Ba'ruf of Khan Yunus, who attempted to murder his employer Moshe Shagi in

Rehovot five days ago, was sealed last night. This is reported by our correspondent Moti Amir.

Today a general strike will be held in the Druze villages in the Golan Heights following the incident in Qatzrin yesterday in which a Jew shot and seriously wounded a Druze from Buq'ata whom he mistook for a terrorist.

One Killed, Dozens Wounded in Khan Yunus Riots

TA1603103693 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] An explosive charge was hurled at an IDF [Israel Defense Forces] patrol in Khan Yunus this morning. The bomb exploded in front of the military vehicle, but nobody was hurt and no damage was caused. The tremendous explosion caused the soldiers to report that an antitank missile was launched at them, but an investigation revealed it was a large explosive charge. Our correspondent Moti Amir reports that after the incident, the IDF sealed the area and riots erupted around the city. Local residents report that Sa'id Salamah, 13, was killed by IDF gunfire and dozens were wounded.

The curfew on Khan Yunus and its environs, imposed after the murder of two Qatif Bloc settlers, Uri Megidish and Simha Levi, was lifted this morning.

45 Injured in Khan Yunus Riots

TA1603140493 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] Sa'id Salamah, a 13-year-old youth from Khan Yunus was killed by IDF [Israel Defense Forces] gunfire during widespread rioting in the town today.

Our correspondent Moti Amir reports that 45 residents were hurt, and one of them sustained serious injuries. Twenty-four of the wounded received medical treatment and were sent home. The riots erupted after an explosive charge went off in front of an IDF patrol. No one was injured in the explosion and no damage was caused.

More Deaths, Injuries

TA1603201493 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 2000 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] Two local residents were killed and over 60 injured today in Khan Yunus by soldiers' gunfire. Eighteen-year-old Fayiz al-Buyuk was killed in riots this evening, while 13-year-old Sa'id Salamah was killed this morning. Local residents told our correspondent Moti Amir that some 80 people had been injured by soldiers' gunfire. Army sources confirmed that 56 casualties had been brought to local hospitals.

A local resident of the al-Nusayrat refugee camp was murdered today on suspicion of collaborating with the authorities.

Reportage on Violence in Other Areas

Three Shot in Janin, Youth Wounded in Hebron

TA1703053093 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500
GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] In Janin, Border Police last night shot and captured three masked men wielding axes who were heading a large protest march. The three were shot while attempting to escape. One was critically wounded, the other two had moderate to serious wounds.

In Hebron, a youth was wounded when soldiers fired shots at stonethrowers. Earlier, during riots in Khan Yunus, two residents were killed by Army gunfire and more than 60 were wounded.

IDF Responds to Hizballah Attacks in Security Zone

TA1703113093 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900
GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] According to Lebanese sources, Hizballah launched three attacks along the northern part of the security zone last night. Our correspondent Yo'av Aviv reports that the attacks consisted of katyushas fired at an SLA [South Lebanese Army] position in the eastern sector, to which IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and SLA troops responded with gunfire.

Artillery fire was exchanged in the area of Shaqra in the eastern sector, with Israel Air Force assault helicopters circling above.

According to another report, two katyushas were fired at the western sector of the security zone, but it is not known exactly where they landed.

Settlers Burn West Bank Arab Gas Station

TA1703120193 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100
GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Early this morning, settlers carried out a violent protest at the 'Eli junction and near the village of Luban al-Sharqiyah in Samaria, burning down a local Arab-owned gas station. Our correspondent Mikha'el Tuchfeld reports that dozens settlers from the area blocked traffic near the 'Eli and other Samaria junctions and set tires on fire in protest over the deteriorating security situation. They set on fire an Arab-owned gas station at the Luban al-Sharqiyah junction, smashed gas pumps, and set the gas station offices on fire.

Arriving on the scene, IDF [Israel Defense Forces] troops dispersed the demonstrators. At present, quiet prevails in the area. Samaria District Police have launched an investigation into the event.

Gaza Arabs Wounded by Army

TA1703124493 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1230
GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Thirty-three Gaza Strip residents were wounded by security forces' gunfire in disturbances that started this morning in several locations, mainly Khan Yunus. Official military sources said that 11 Arab casualties are still hospitalized in the al-Nasir Hospital. This was reported by our correspondent Roni Sofer.

'Total Confidence Crisis' Reported Between Labor, SHAS

TA1603174193 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700
GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] The SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] Council of Torah Scholars will tomorrow discuss whether the party should remain in the coalition in light of the security situation.

This morning, Rabbi 'Ovadya Yosef met with representatives of the settlers from Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip and told his close followers that due to the deterioration in the security situation, SHAS must reconsider its continued participation in the government.

Following the Knesset House Committee's vote to remove the parliamentary immunity of Deputy Minister Pinhasi, SHAS Knesset Member Yosef 'Azran said that there was a total confidence crisis between the Labor party and SHAS, and in 'Azran's own words, there was not one iota of trust between the two factions.

Our correspondent Hayim Hecht reports that Coalition Chairman Eli Dayan said that he would hold talks with SHAS officials later tonight to clarify the situation.

Knesset Labor Faction Expresses Support for Rabin

TA1603172793 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700
GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] The Labor party Knesset faction has issued a communique expressing support for the prime minister on his visit to the United States and for the security forces in their battle against terrorism.

The ministers and Knesset members [MK's] who participated in the faction meeting criticized those calling on the prime minister to give up the defense portfolio and appoint a full-time defense minister. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that Deputy Defense Minister Mordekhay Gur said that under the present circumstances the fact that the prime minister also held the defense portfolio was even advantageous. Ministers Ben-Eli'ezer, Shahal, Bar'am, and Shetrit asserted that right-wing demagogues and inciters should not be permitted to take over the streets. MK Ori Or, the chairman of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, said

that certain people were encouraged by all the bloodshed and exploited every Jewish fatality to continue their incitement.

U.S. Warning to Tourists Deemed 'Without Justification'

PM1603162593 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
14 Mar 93 p 1

[Salamah Ni'mat report: "Jordan Foiled Jihad Organization Operation Two Weeks Before U.S. Warning"]

[Excerpt] Amman—An authoritative Jordanian source said yesterday that the U.S. warning to U.S. tourists about "the increasing possibility of terrorist threats" against them in Jordan came after the Jordanian authorities briefed the U.S. Embassy in Amman on a plan to carry out a terrorist attack on a bus carrying U.S. tourists, which the Jordanian security services foiled.

The Jordanian official told AL-HAYAH that the security services foiled the terrorist operation and arrested its planners, who belong to the "Islamic Jihad Organization" led by Hasan Muhanna, who was based in the Syrian city of Dar'a. It is not known whether Muhanna is still in Dar'a. He added that the operation was foiled two weeks before the U.S. warning was issued by U.S. State Department Spokesman Richard Boucher at the beginning of March.

The official pointed out that the U.S. Embassy in Amman informed Washington of the operation and requested instructions regarding taking the necessary security precautions. But the U.S. Embassy, and Jordanian officials too, were surprised by the warning, which was issued despite the foiling of the operation and without consulting the embassy in Amman. King Husayn and Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir contacted the U.S. State Department to express Jordan's alarm at the warning, which has dealt a blow to the tourist season in Jordan and was issued "without justification." The Jordanian official believes that the "Islamic Jihad Organization" led by Muhanna has received financing from Iran in recent years. A Jordanian-Syrian agreement had been reached to cooperate to prevent such operations.. [passage omitted]

U.S. Urged Not To Respond to Rabin's 'Compromise Solutions'

JN1703095893 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 17 Mar 93 p 1

[Editorial: "The Tune of Compromise Solutions"]

[Text] During his meeting with President Clinton, Rabin talked about the compromise solutions he has been calling for to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict. This call does not indicate, to those near or far, a commitment to UN resolutions on the conflict or international legitimacy. In fact, it shows a desire to freeze these resolutions and replace them with so-called compromise solutions. Rabin began playing this tune when he called for a compromise solution to the deportee issue—a solution which does not respond to Resolution 799 and replaces it with the U.S.-Israeli deal that is considered an abortion

of this resolution. From this premise, the Israeli prime minister's talk about compromise solutions to the Arab-Israeli conflict implies great danger because it means calling for non-compliance with Resolutions 242 and 338 and replacing them with the claimed solutions. Rabin's remarks contradict the basis of the peace process represented by these two resolutions and the land-for-peace principle. There is no doubt that the U.S. reaction to Rabin's call will be of great importance. The fate of the peace process and how long the basis of this process will remain will be determined in light of this U.S. reaction.

It should be noted that the role of a full partner, which Washington intends to play in the peace process, does not excuse it from fully complying with the basis of this process. It also does not give it the right to replace the basis of the peace process with a U.S.-Israeli deal or a compromise solution as a response to Rabin's call. Therefore, we urge Washington not to become involved in assassinating Resolutions 242 and 338 and the land-for-peace principle. Moreover, Washington is urged to adopt a decisive stand that would make Israel comply with the two resolutions as well as international legitimacy.

Paper Urges Arab Caution Toward U.S.-Israeli Moves

JN1703115093 Amman SAWT AL-SHA'B in Arabic
17 Mar 93 pp 1, 16

[Editorial: "The Clinton-Rabin Meeting Does Not Serve the Peace Process"]

[Text] The results of the Clinton-Rabin meeting in Washington will no doubt encourage Israel to continue its intransigence and hardline stands toward the deportee issue and all international resolutions.

The new U.S. President made no reference at all, either directly or indirectly, to the need to return the Palestinian deportees to their homes in implementation of UN Resolution 799. All his statements emphasized U.S. economic and military support for Israel and the need to maintain Israel's military edge in the region. His statements also stressed the need to end the Arab boycott on Israel and normalize economic and trade relations with it.

Rabin cut short his visit to the United States because of the security earthquake that is shaking Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories—an earthquake which is the result of Israeli violence and escalating Palestinian resistance. Rabin, however, refuses to give up his hardline stands toward the deportees, which will open the door wide for further violence and counterviolence in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. It will also create an additional obstacle to peace and weaken the Arab trend and concern for resuming the negotiations. At the same time, Rabin's refusal weakens the role of the United States, which is supposed to be a full partner in the peace process, and makes it lose its credibility.

Moreover, it removes the content and meaning from Clinton's statements that 1993 will be the year to achieve peace.

In any case, this is all connected with the U.S.-Israeli strategic alliance as emphasized by Clinton. As for the Arab parties, they should be fully alert toward U.S.-supported Israeli moves. They should also be cautious about this Israeli-U.S. understanding or coordination and try to achieve strong and coherent coordination among themselves, based on the land for peace principle and international legitimacy resolutions, which stress the inevitability of returning the deportees to their homeland before resuming the negotiations.

The Jordanian stand is clear, frank, principled, and irrevocable. It supports the Palestinian stand and will be fully in line with the Arab stand that will emerge from the cordons states meeting in Damascus at the end of this month. The Arab parties, particularly the Palestinian side, should adopt a decisive stand toward the deportee issue in order to put Washington and Tel Aviv or the U.S.-Israeli alliance before a difficult test and to place the ball in its court.

If Israel does not submit to UN Resolution 799 on the deportee issue, it will not submit to other UN Resolutions on which the peace process is based.

Arabs Should 'Fear' More U.S. Involvement in Peace Process

JN1703081693 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English
17 Mar 93 p 4

[Editorial: "Peace—Israel Style"]

[Text] The visit of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin to the United States seems to have achieved what was exactly expected of it: More tangible U.S. support for Tel Aviv and a much more forceful pledge to its security and other needs.

Compare the force of this commitment to the shy and lukewarm statements in support of international demands on Israel to comply with U.N. resolutions, and the obvious conclusion is that the Arabs should fear—and not urge—more U.S. involvement in the resumed peace effort.

The tilt of the new U.S. administration towards Israel, which was so clearly demonstrated during Mr. Rabin's joint press conference with President Bill Clinton Monday, is at best disappointing, and at worst alarming, about the future of the peace process and the hope for finding a just and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

President Clinton promised Mr. Rabin a continued U.S. commitment to Israel's military superiority in the region, initiated with him a dialogue to raise the U.S.-Israeli relationship on a new level of strategic partnership and will send the Israeli prime minister home with a pledge to maintain the billions of dollars of aid his country receives from Washington.

President Clinton did in fact reiterate his country's intention to keep the peace process alive. But the kind of peace he spoke of seems to be the one advocated by Israel—and no one else.

The president said he wanted a peace that "will finally accord Israel the recognition and acceptance that its people have yearned for so long and have been too long denied." But he did not say the peace that he wants should end the suffering of Palestinians, who for too long also, have been subjugated to all kinds of Israeli oppression and denial of rights.

He said Israel should live in security, but he did not say it should meet its obligation under international law. He spoke against terrorism, but he did not speak against the demolition of homes and the expulsion of people from their homes and homeland and the killing of children and unarmed civilians.

Peace in the Middle East, said the president, should be based on United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and "it must involve full normalisation, diplomatic relations, open borders, commerce and tourism... the Israeli people cannot make peace unless they feel secure."

What Mr. Clinton forgot, or chose to forget, to mention, however, is that the Arabs too cannot make peace unless they feel secure and unless they feel their rights are respected and guaranteed. "I believe that the (Arabs) know that the United States has had a historic relationship of friendship with Israel, but also know that we can be counted upon to keep our word," he said.

The president is only half right on this point. The Arabs do know the extent of the friendship that binds Tel Aviv and Washington together. But they have yet to find a good enough reason to know that they can count on the credibility of the United States.

UK Official Leaves After Talks on Ties

JN1603131493 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1200
GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] The Assistant Under Secretary of the British Foreign Office for Middle Eastern Affairs Mr. Michael Burton left Amman today at the end of his visit to Jordan. During the visit, Mr. Burton held talks with senior Jordanian officials on bilateral relations and the resumption of the Arab-Israeli Middle East peace talks.

Al-Hariri on Reconstruction, Aid, Syrian Presence
*NC1603145793 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1153
GMT 16 Mar 93*

[Interview with Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri by unidentified "Radio Canada International" correspondent in Beirut; date not given—recorded; broadcast in progress]

[Excerpts] [Al-Hariri]...First, the reconstruction of Lebanon (?is not) confined to aid. Aid does not account for much of the reconstruction bill in Lebanon. The bill's [word indistinct] is big, around (?15) billion dollars. The government is studying the program and will announce its plan to reconstruct Lebanon in the next few weeks. I hope it will be a good deal less than 15 billion dollars. I hope that aid will cover part of this bill. We will rely on aid and on easy and commercial loans. Some of the projects for the reconstruction of Lebanon could be self-financing. So, we have a Lebanese plan and we have determination. I always say that without a Lebanese will, there can be no homeland. If there is no national will, there can be no homeland. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] The West accuses the Lebanese regime of being totally submissive to Syria's policy. This is supported by the Lebanese regime's reluctance to push the redeployment of the Syrian troops toward al-Biq'a'. What is your view on the [words indistinct] facing the world that Lebanon pursues an independent policy?

[Al-Hariri] First, Lebanon need not account to anybody. Either we are an independent state or we are not. We act as an independent state. We have no reason to account to other countries. Second, according to al-Ta'if accord, Syria is supposed to stay with us for a time to help reestablish security in Lebanon. This is what happened. The Syrian Army helped us. You are here and can see for yourself that security is stable, militias no longer exist, weapons have been collected, and the state gets stronger daily. Credit for this goes to God first and Syrian Army assistance second. Nobody could forget this, friend or foe. We were promised assistance for the Army and the internal security forces so that they could replace the Syrian troops stationed in Lebanon and maintain security. No country, Arab or foreign, has given major assistance to the Lebanese Army or internal security forces. We received some minor assistance. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia helped us by granting (?60) million dollars, but not for the Army or weapons. Part of the aid was in the form of nonmilitary assistance to the Army and the internal security forces, such as vehicles, clothes, and so on. As you know, the Army needs millions. Our budget does not allow more funds to be spent on the Army or internal security forces. We use the funds allocated for people's food to spend on the Army and internal security forces. We have contacted friendly and sisterly countries to help us rebuild and buy weapons for the Army and the internal security forces so that they could be ready to take over security. But it would be illogical to ask me to tell the Syrians to leave just to prove

that I can do it, because they would leave if I asked them to, leaving security to us when we were not ready. For a long time in Lebanon, hostility toward Syria was thought to be the symbol of patriotism. This is wrong. We could be patriotic Lebanese and safeguard Lebanon's independence and national sovereignty while remaining friendly with the Syrians. It need not be: The more hostile you are to Syria, the more patriotic you are. This is incorrect and (?impractical). There are situations on which we may or may not agree with them. Animosity toward Syria is not the criterion for patriotism. [passage omitted]

Al-Hariri Expresses Hope for Future at Banquet
*NC1703073293 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530
GMT 17 Mar 93*

[Text] In a speech at a Ramadan dinner banquet hosted by the Maronite Council in Juniyah yesterday, Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri expressed appreciation for the attention those preparing for the Catholic synod have paid to a number of Lebanese issues, noting that their efforts positively contribute to the rebuilding of the state. He said: While we support the concept of a national dialogue and the sincere effort to promote it, we must add that the liberation of the south and western al-Biq'a' constitute a basis for safeguarding the dialogue.

He added: The process of peace and rebuilding is bound to face many difficulties and problems. This is natural. But despite the difficulties that shroud this new path, it is full of hope, because the rebuilding of the country is a wager that must be won by the Lebanese people. We have a chance to emerge from years of division and liberate ourselves from the slogans that dominated many of us. Spreading an atmosphere of pessimism in the country harms the country's real interests and hurts people in certain areas who have suffered from displacement. The continuation of such an atmosphere could encourage Lebanese immigrants to remain where they are and to prompt others to emigrate. This will maintain the bleeding, which is bound to weaken the entire Lebanese body, exposing it to further afflictions. No sincere person who believes in Lebanon could wish something like this.

Al-Hariri Stresses 'Optimism' for Future
*NC1703075693 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0615
GMT 17 Mar 93*

[Text] In a press interview today, Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri said that everything calls for optimism, and there is nothing that calls for pessimism regarding the future. He said that the pessimistic atmosphere is created by those who have failed in navigating the ship, and now want to foil the process of peace and development to justify their failure. They are doing this at the expense of Lebanon and its people. He added: We are all called upon to mobilize our resources to develop Lebanon. He stressed his determination to proceed with the salvation

process, noting that all obstacles will be removed. Concluding, he said that his relationship with President Ilyas al-Hirawi is excellent, and that the state machinery has begun functioning.

Chamber of Deputies Approves 6 New Ministries

NC1703073693 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Excerpts] During a plenary session yesterday, The Chamber of Deputies approved the establishment of six new ministries. Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri chaired the meeting, which lasted more than five hours. [passage omitted]

Six laws were passed yesterday to establish the following ministries: Environment, Culture, Vocational and Technical Education, Transport, Expatriates Affairs, and Social Affairs. [passage omitted]

Ex-Premier Stresses Primacy of Liberation War

PM1603143193 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 13 Mar 93 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Awn: Liberation War Is Continuing and Will Only End With Liberation of Lebanon"]

[Text] London, AL-HAYAH—On the fourth anniversary of his declaration of "the war of liberation," former Prime Minister Michel 'Awn has stated that "this war is continuing through other faces and will not end before achieving its objective, which is liberation of Lebanon."

In a statement to AL-HAYAH, he said that "the liberation of Lebanon will come through the liberation of the individual through reaffirmation of his rights as a citizen and his rights as a human being in Lebanon, and liberation of the territory by clearing it of all occupation forces."

He added that "There is one established historical fact, which is that the people and the territory last for ever but the occupiers disappear. No matter how long they chain our legs and arms and no matter how much they beat us, our eyes will always seek the sun, will always see the light, and will always condemn the darkness."

Asked what the liberation war has achieved, he replied that "The liberation war gave the Lebanese people consciousness of their cause. The current situation in Lebanon has convinced the citizens that liberation is right and necessary despite the fact that some occupation agents are trying to make the people despair of their honorable stance."

Asked if the "liberation war" was similar to the "mother of all battles," he replied: "There is no similarity whatsoever. The liberation war is a war of right against wrong, a war in defense of the homeland, and a war for the restoration of sovereignty. I did not go to Damascus to fight the Syrians. They fought me in B'abda. Anyone who ridicules the liberation war is one who kneels before the occupation and

is an agent and a traitor. Let me emphasize on this occasion that the defense of the homeland is not a matter of personal profit or loss. He who capitulates to the occupation should not make fun of him who resists. The national heritage created by the liberation war, which is continuing, is a heritage that will benefit even the children of the agents and the lackeys. These children will be proud of it and they will be ashamed of their fathers and grandfathers because history will curse everyone who did not resist and everyone who capitulated."

In conclusion, he said: "The price of sovereignty and independence is high. Steadfastness is the only solution. Our quality of life will not improve under the occupation. Anyone who thinks that acceptance of the status quo would improve matters is mistaken. The homeland can only be rebuilt after it is purged of the occupation."

Irish Defense Minister Visits, Inspects UN Force

NC1703051493 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] Irish Defense Minister David Andrews has expressed hope that peace soon will be established in the Middle East.

Speaking upon arrival at Beirut airport this afternoon, Andrews stressed that the Irish troops in the south will stay until peace is realized. From the airport, the Irish defense minister went straight to a meeting with Lebanese counterpart Muhsin Dallul. He is to travel this evening to the south, where he will inspect his country's contingent in the UN Interim Force in Lebanon. He then will return to Beirut for a meeting with Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri.

Phalangist Delegation Leaves for Damascus

NC1703103293 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0915 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] A ranking Phalangist delegation left for the Syrian capital this morning to meet with Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam. The delegation is headed by Munir al-Haj, Phalangist Party deputy leader, and includes Salah Matar, George Qassis, and Shaykh Simon al-Khazin, members of the party's Political Bureau.

Phalangist sources said this visit is part the party's Political Bureau plans to follow up on some internal and external files and to discuss Lebanese and regional developments in light of the crucial stage of preparations for resuming the ninth round of peace talks.

U.S. Policy Said Responsible for Anti-Arab Campaign

NC1603160893 Beirut AL-SAFIR in Arabic 9 Mar 93 p 13

[Article by Ghassan Mukahhal: "New York: Questions and Targets"]

[Text] A few days before the explosion in the World Trade Center in New York, the U.S. State Department warned Americans visiting Jordan that they might be subjected to what it termed "terrorist attacks" and spoke of increased "terrorist" actions in Jordan. The warning was sudden, especially as Jordan had not witnessed any security incidents to warrant such a warning. Was it a coincidence or was the U.S. Administration predicting the future?

A few days before the explosion, official U.S. circles and the media began a campaign against Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman as if they had just discovered that he had arrived secretly and suddenly in the United States, although he has been there for years and carried out activities in public. A few days after the explosion, his name was included in every report on or analysis of the explosion, although his name never came up during the investigation. The only fact was that Jordanian "defendant" Muhammad Salamah prayed at the mosque where Shaykh 'Abd-al-Rahman preached.

A few days before the young Jordanian was charged, U.S. media started to echo an Israeli campaign that claims the real leaders of Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, are in the United States and that Hamas receives its basic funding from its Arab supporters there. The charges against Salamah were an excuse to launch media campaigns against Arabs and Muslims on the pretext of attacking the political forces that the West regard as "extremist," including Hamas. It was an opportunity to present Congress with a draft law banning the political activities of Hamas.

The odd thing is that this campaign, which has recruited the world's biggest media empires, is based on one point, that Muhammad Salamah rented a van that investigators believe might have been used in the bombing.

There are many contradictions in the story about Salamah. It is even illogical. The police arrested Salamah when he went to the rental company to ask for a refund of the deposit he paid on the van that was stolen from him. He had reported the theft to the police. Is it logical for him to appear in public and demand a refund if he was really involved?

U.S. security bodies said that Salamah, like many other Arabs, was under surveillance before the explosion.

Could he have taken part in bombing the largest and most protected building in New York while under surveillance?

The security bodies also said they suspected Salamah some days before his arrest but waited to make their move. If this is true, why accuse other parties and sides, starting with the Croats, the Serbs, and then the Medellin cartel that smuggles drugs from Colombia?

It is clear that the demonic brain that runs Washington, and that might or might not know the responsible party, wants to exploit the incident to the full. It started leveling charges against every party that opposes its policies, one by one, so that they would rush not only to declare their innocence, but also to take positions and act in a way that would satisfy it. This is what did happen.

Since the Arab-Islamic side is the most rebellious party against U.S. policy, it has become the accused party and the justification for a campaign that has nothing to do with the New York explosion, but everything to do with Washington's policy toward the region. This is what is happening.

Shelling, Overflights Reported for 16 Mar

NC1703104493 Shanayh Voice of the Mountain in Arabic 1000 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] The NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY reported that the occupation forces' artillery fired about 40 shells at the areas of Zawtar al-Sharqiyah, Zawtar al-Gharbiyah, and Qa'qa'iyat al-Jisr last night. The areas were also raked with machine-gun fire. Two helicopters flew over the area. The enemy also raked 'Ali al-Tahir hill for about an hour.

Security sources in the south reported that resistance fighters attacked an Israeli enemy position on al-Shumariyah hill last night, using large-caliber machine guns and rockets. The enemy retaliated with tank fire against the area north of the position.

The same sources said that two Katyusha rockets were fired last night at an Agent Lahd militia position in the occupied border strip. This was followed by enemy shelling of Shaqrah and its suburbs.

Enemy warplanes have been conducting mock raids over the south since 1000 today.

Nature of Rabin's Talk About 'Risks' Questioned

JN1603163093 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Station commentary]

[Text] Gentlemen: While Yitzhaq Rabin was holding intensive talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton in Washington, the situation in the occupied Arab territories seriously deteriorated, and armed settlers stormed and searched villages, towns, and suburbs, and terrorized children, women, and the elderly by opening fire indiscriminately.

The Israeli Government had earlier adopted a series of strong repressive measures and reinforced its occupation forces in the occupied Gaza and West Bank, while asking settlers to carry weapons. Naturally, this will only intensify the situation. The settlers are waiting for a mere hint to commit massacres and drive the situation toward an explosion.

It is now clear to all that Israel's repressive policy has not succeeded in destroying the Palestinian intifadah and only fuels it further. It is also clear that the mass demolition of Arab quarters and homes and the killing of children in fact represent the occupation's failure to control the Palestinian people and wipe out their identity. Arab delegations to the Washington talks presented constructive and balanced proposals to realize a comprehensive and just peace in the region, but their efforts were confronted by Israel's negative attitude and its expansionist greed. Had the Israeli rulers been serious in the drive to realize peace, they would have responded to the objective proposals which Syria presented and which were lauded by all political circles, including Washington, which considered them an important step forward toward attaining this peace.

Yitzhaq Rabin has chosen the iron-fist policy, deportation of hundreds of Palestinians, and escalation of killings and violence. It is clear now that Rabin, who boasted that he paralyzed the intifadah, has in fact only added fuel to its fire. Conditions in the occupied Arab territories are going from bad to worse, and threaten serious catastrophes and repercussions.

It was leaked from the Clinton-Rabin talks that Rabin is prepared to take what he called risks for peace, without explaining the nature of these risks. In our opinion, these risks do not go beyond limited withdrawal from some occupied territory, as proven by his call for secure borders. All Arab parties, headed by Syria, have already refused to discuss any limited withdrawal, and are adhering to a total Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied territories. Limited withdrawal cannot lead to peace, and the Arabs want a real and honorable peace. We, along with all those who are sincere in their desire for peace, ask: How can the Arabs be convinced of Rabin's talk about peace and his alleged risks while scores of Arabs are killed by the fire of Israeli forces and

Zionist settlers, their houses are demolished, and they are taken from their homes and sent to exile or prison.

All signs stress that Rabin went to Washington not to revive the peace process, but to be reassured that U.S. military, financial, and economic support for Israel will continue under all circumstances, and to seek an entrenchment of the strategic alliance by implicating the United States in a series of military agreements to stockpile weapons in Israel. This will cast heavy doubt on the U.S. Administration's pledge to act as an honest and full partner, and will undermine its credibility in the region.

The facts are now clear to all those concerned with the Middle East crisis, topped by the fact that Israel violates human rights in the occupied Arab territories in cruel and dangerous fashion, deprives the people of these territories of all their rights, and unceasingly confiscates their land to construct settlements in violation of all Security Council resolutions. Israel also violates international agreements and charters, defies the United Nations, and practices the law of the jungle. These facts necessitate that the international community takes a firm stance in support of right and justice, and puts an end to the Israeli rulers' belligerence and their serious practices. Otherwise, the cause of peace will continue to stumble and may end up in total collapse.

Rabin Warned Against Canceling U.S. Full Partner Role

JN1603083893 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Press review]

[Text] Commenting on Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's visit to Washington and the U.S. Administration's pledge to play the role of a full partner in the peace talks, AL-BA'TH says: There is a great disparity, perhaps even contradiction, between the role of full partner in the peace process, to which the Clinton administration has declared commitment, and the strategic alliance which still exists between Washington and Tel Aviv. Consequently, this might directly influence the new U.S. role in advancing the peace process.

AL-BA'TH adds: Before meeting Rabin, the U.S. President said he was optimistic about resuming the peace process, without concealing his concern over obstacles still impeding progress in the peace talks. The head of the Israeli Government, who has deliberately visited Washington prior to the date set for resuming the talks, has made many statements focusing on the full-partner concept on the one hand and on deepening strategic relations with the U.S. Administration on the other.

AL-BA'TH goes on to say: Perhaps it is premature to talk about the outcome of Rabin's talks in Washington. We do not want to say that the differences between the two parties could worsen dramatically. Strategic relations do

exist between them, and Rabin will no doubt seek to take full advantage of this fact, especially militarily and economically.

The paper notes the rights emphasized by international resolutions, on which the peace process kicked off in Madrid. Syria reaffirmed these rights through the written paper it submitted to the Washington talks.

Concluding its comment, AL-BA'TH says: Rabin's task in the U.S. capital will be difficult if he tries to cancel the role of the full partner and blow up the peace initiative by pursuing a policy of deception, maneuvers, and play with words, especially since the Clinton administration has repeatedly asserted its commitment to the peace process and the full-partner role.

TISHRIN also highlights U.S. partnership in the peace talks and the steps required from the United States. The paper says: The United States has emphasized its concern to see the peace talks resume in Washington. The United States, along with Russia, addressed invitations for a new round of these talks. At the same time, the Clinton administration expressed its willingness to assume the role of a full partner who seeks to advance the peace process and honestly contributes toward removing the many obstacles placed by Israel in the way of peace.

TISHRIN adds: The partnership role Washington has asserted it will play makes it incumbent on the United States to take several steps that could facilitate the convening of the next round of negotiations and make it succeed. These steps should be directed toward Yitzhaq Rabin, who is currently visiting the United States.

The paper explains that the first step is to work to make Israel comply with UN Resolutions 242 and 338 and implement them in full. Washington is asked to take another step by removing the obstacles placed by Rabin in the way of the peace process, foremost of which is the question of the deportees. The third step which Washington should take is to immediately seek to stop the war declared by Israel on Arab citizens in the occupied Arab territories.

The paper goes on to say: Since Washington is going to play a full-partner role, as it says, the success of this role requires huge efforts to mend U.S. reputation in the Arab world and convince Arabs that Washington is not against them or against their national and pan-Arab ambitions. Recent and distant history offers hundreds of examples which confirm U.S. bias toward Israel.

TISHRIN concludes: The concept of partnership means treating the other partners on an equal footing and not being biased toward any partner in particular. If Washington is eager to see its role as partner in the peace process succeed, then it has a great mission to accomplish; namely, stopping blind bias toward Israel, disregarding the Israeli view of the situation in the region, and freeing itself from Israeli shackles burdening the United States and preventing it from playing a just, honest, and objective role in the Middle East.

Clinton Remarks Called 'New Obstacle' to Peace

JN1703091993 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Press review]

[Text] In its editorial today, AL-BA'TH says: What was the meaning of the statements made by the U.S. President after his meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin? And, do these statements serve the peace process? When U.S. President Clinton states frankly that Israel is the security and political center of the Middle East, and then calls on the Arabs to recognize it and adhere to its concepts, this, without any doubt, means that the U.S. Administration wants to see everything in the region only from the Israeli perspective.

AL-BA'TH adds: The statements made by the U.S. President make us ask: Which peace is the U.S. Administration talking about? It is as if Clinton's statements came to add a new obstacle to the peace process, and not the opposite as was expected. At a minimum, these statements came to help Israel torpedo any hope of reaching just solutions to the situation in the region.

AL-BA'TH says: We do not want America to stand at the side of the Arabs. However, it would be useful if America was with international legitimacy. Instead of asking Israel to respond to the international legitimacy resolutions, the U.S. President's statements came to renew the age of American-Israeli partnership, to reassure Yitzhaq Rabin that American financial assistance will continue, and to firmly maintain Israel's qualitative military superiority over all the Arabs.

AL-BA'TH says: Not satisfied merely with adopting the Israeli concept of peace, the U.S. President called on the Arabs to end the boycott of Israel and to normalize relations with it, without making any mention of Arab rights.

Concluding, AL-BA'TH says: The U.S. policy management's disregard for the Arab individual was apparent in Clinton's talks with Rabin. Neither the issue of the deportees nor the massacres committed by the occupation forces against Arab citizens was raised during the talks. The question remains: How should the Arabs think and act?

In its commentary today, TISHRIN says: The American-Israeli strategic alliance is not in harmony at all with the pledge made by the Clinton administration to play the role of a full and effective partner in the peace talks and to achieve a just and comprehensive solution in the Middle East.

TISHRIN notes that American weapons are aimed at the Arabs. The paper says that Rabin declared a real war against the Arab citizens in the occupied territory and instructed the settlers to commit crimes and attack villages, towns, and quarters. Rabin did all this while in Washington holding talks with the U.S. officials.

TISHRIN says that the full partner in the peace talks must be fair and neutral. This certainly does not apply to the United States, which is biased toward Israel whether in terms of military support, strengthening the strategic alliance, and flooding it with large amounts of aid, or in terms of remaining silent at its escalating crimes in the occupied Arab territory.

TISHRIN adds: Rabin's visit to Washington was not aimed to give momentum to the peace process, but for Rabin to reassure himself that the American military, financial, economic, and political support for Israel will continue. All indications show that Rabin did not present to President Clinton any peaceful initiative or commitment to implement the Security Council resolutions. Instead, he went back to speaking about secure borders, his readiness to make risks for the sake of peace, and compromises. This means returning only part of the occupied territory with Israel devouring the rest.

TISHRIN says: Resolution 242, the basis of the settlement as acknowledged by the previous and current U.S. Administrations, stipulates the inadmissibility of

acquiring others' land by force. The successive U.S. Administrations affirmed that the Golan, Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza, and southern Lebanon are occupied territory. These administrations believed that the deportation process is contrary to peace and an outright violation of international law. The EC, including Britain, which drafted Resolution 242, also called for withdrawal from all occupied territory in exchange for peace. So, how can Rabin reconcile peace with occupation while occupation is contrary to peace?

Concluding, TISHRIN says that Rabin's alleged risks mean playing games to prolong the conflict in the Middle East, drain the American and Western treasuries, and prepare to launch more wars and create tragedies in the countries in the region. Working for peace is not a risk, but a guarantee for stability and security. If Rabin is a man of war, as he appears to have been throughout his life, the U.S. Administration must exert pressure to curb Rabin's aggressiveness. Encouraging Israel's aggressiveness will definitely be reflected on the U.S. role and will certainly threaten the peace process.

India

'Powerful Bomb Explosion' in Central Calcutta

BK1703010293 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0035 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] In Calcutta, 22 persons were killed and 62 injured in a powerful bomb explosion in a house at Bow Bazaar Street in the central area of the city just after midnight. Thirty seriously injured have been admitted in the three hospitals. Rescue operations are continuing to locate more bodies from the debris. Twenty-two fire engines were rushed to the spot. Senior police officials and the mayor of Calcutta, Mr. Prashant Chatterji, visited the spot. [Hong Kong AFP in English at 0037 GMT on 17 March reports: "At least 50 people died and 100 were injured Wednesday when a powerful explosion ripped through one of Calcutta's busiest business centres, doctors said here.

"Forty people were declared dead by doctors in the Calcutta Medical College (CMC) while the remaining 10 casualties were reported from three other city hospitals.

"The toll is 50," said a CMC official.

"Three houses were completely destroyed when a powerful explosion ripped through the Muslim-dominated district around 0015 am (1845 GMT).

"Police say many other people were feared trapped in the rubble of the demolished house."]

Delhi Updates Calcutta Situation

BK1703030493 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] In Calcutta, 31 persons were killed and 77 injured in a powerful bomb explosion in a building at Bow Bazaar street near its crossing with Central Avenue shortly after midnight last night. Agencies have, however, put the toll higher. Forty-five seriously injured have been admitted in three city hospitals. The condition of some of the injured is said to be critical. The building, which housed a number of wooden furniture shops, was completely destroyed and the adjacent buildings partially damaged. Rescue operations are continuing. Twenty-two fire engines have been rushed to the spot.

Senior police officials and the mayor of Calcutta, Mr. Prashant Chatterji, visited the spot. According to the state home secretary, a team of Army and police personnel has been asked to investigate the matter. A Union Home Ministry spokesman said in New Delhi that the Center has assured all possible assistance to the West Bengal government to tackle the situation. [Hong Kong AFP in English at 0219 GMT on 17 March adds: "The Bombay police will investigate if the powerful explosion which killed at least 50 people in Calcutta early Wednesday was linked to the series of blasts here last week, a senior officer said.

"It is not unlikely," joint police commissioner M.N. Singh said, when asked if he suspected any links between the Calcutta and the Bombay explosions.

"We will be certainly looking into it," he added.

"Singh said Bombay police would also send a team to the eastern Indian city to find out, if explosives were used to bring down the three buildings in Calcutta, were they similar to those used here on Friday."]

Death Toll Reaches 47

BK1703090293 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] The death toll in yesterday's Calcutta bomb explosion has gone up to 47 with the recovery of more bodies from under the debris of the five-story house on Bow Bazaar Street. The condition of six of the 92 seriously injured persons is said to be critical. Rescue operations are under way. The governor, Professor Nurul Hasan, visited the site of the explosion.

A Home Ministry spokesman said in New Delhi that the center is rushing forensic experts to help the state government in the investigations. According to the state chief secretary, bomb experts and forensic officials of the Army have also been pressed into service to pinpoint the explosion spot. Making a statement in the assembly, the chief minister, Mr. Jyoti Basu, expressed deep shock over the incident. He said a high-level inquiry has been instituted to probe the blast. Mr. Basu said he has directed the hospital authorities to ensure best possible treatment to the injured and make alternative medical arrangement for the affected people. The chief minister disclosed that two persons have been detained for interrogation. The house observed one minute's silence in memory of those who lost their lives in the explosion.

The union minister of state for home, Mr. Rajesh Pilot; the minister for coal, Mr. Ajit Kumar Panja; and the CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist] leader, Mr. Somnath Chatterjee; have air-dashed to Calcutta. They will meet the chief minister, Mr. Jyoti Basu, and other leaders and discuss the situation arising out of last night's explosion. They will also visit the explosion site. The Left Front chairman, Mr. Sailen Das Gupta, and the state Congress-I chief, Mr. Soumen Mitra, have also condemned the ghastly act.

Security arrangements in Delhi have been beefed up in wake of the Calcutta explosion. A police spokesman said strict vigil is being maintained at all sensitive places and vital installations. Patrolling is being intensified in vulnerable pockets as a precautionary measure. The police spokesman also appealed to the people to be watchful about unclaimed objects at public places.

Security has been tightened in Tamil Nadu in view of the recent bomb blasts in Bombay and Calcutta. The state chief minister, Ms. Jayalalitha, held a meeting with senior officials in Madras today and reviewed the law and order situation.

Further Report

BK1703162693 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] The West Bengal government has ordered a high-level inquiry into last night's bomb blast in Calcutta. The chief minister, Mr. Jyoti Basu, informed the state assembly today that two persons have been detained for interrogation in connection with the incident. The house observed one-minute silence in memory of the victims of the explosion.

The home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, told the Rajya Sabha today that 47 persons died in the explosion. Ninety-two people were injured and 16 of them are in a serious condition. He told the house that investigations are on and he did not rule out the possibility of more bodies being recovered from under the debris. Here is a report by our Calcutta correspondent, Biren Shah.

[Begin recording] A major tragedy struck Calcutta last night, when a powerful bomb explosion in a house in the Bow Bazaar area rendered 47 dead and about 100 injured. A three-story building housing a good number of daily wage earners was completely razed to the ground and a few adjacent buildings partially damaged. Rescue operation which started immediately after the blast is still continuing to locate more bodies from the debris. Two persons have been taken into custody for interrogation. Meanwhile, preliminary investigation has been started by the forensic experts. [end recording]

The center is sending a high-level team comprising personnel from intelligence agencies and explosive experts tonight to Calcutta to investigate last night's explosion. Disclosing this to newsmen at Calcutta Airport this afternoon, the minister of state for home, Mr. Rajesh Pilot, said that all possible assistance will be given to the West Bengal government to find out the cause and to nab the culprits. Describing the blast as unfortunate, Mr. Pilot said that both the incidents at Bombay and Calcutta indicate that some forces are trying to destabilize the country. Mr. Pilot said that the West Bengal chief minister has sought additional paramilitary forces and a decision on the subject will be taken tonight itself. Mr. Pilot urged the people to be more cautious about their vehicles and take adequate precautions before using them. Earlier, Mr. Rajesh Pilot reviewed the situation with the chief minister, Mr. Jyoti Basu. The union minister, Mr. Ajit Kumar Panja; CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist] leader, Mr. Somnath Chatterjee; the state information and cultural affairs minister, Mr. Buddhadev Bhattacharya; and the Pradesh [state] Congress-I president, Mr. Soumen Mitra were also present during the discussions. Later, Mr. Pilot and Mr. Panja inspected the explosion site and visited the injured persons in the hospitals. The West Bengal governor, Mr. Nurul Hassan, and the state chief minister had also visited the site and took stock of the situation.

Police Detain Two Suspects

BK1703072293 Hong Kong AFP in English 0716 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Calcutta, March 17 (AFP)—Police detained two suspects Wednesday in connection with a massive explosion which killed 50 people here overnight, officials said.

Jyoti Basu, chief minister of West Bengal, of which Calcutta is capital, told the state assembly that the owners of the building where the blast occurred just after midnight have been detained by police for interrogation.

They were identified as Abdur Rauf and S.K. Rashid.

At least 50 people were killed and 125 people injured in the explosion in the predominantly Moslem Bow Bazaar district of this eastern Indian city.

UAE Contacted for Extradition of 2 Persons on Bombay Blasts

BK1703091293 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] New Delhi is in touch with the United Arab Emirates authorities for the extradition of two persons in connection with the Bombay blasts of last Friday. The home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, told the Lok Sabha today that according to the information available now, the two persons identified as Momens, who left Bombay a day before the blasts, seem to have connections with the incidents. He said the Ministry of External Affairs is in touch with the UAE authorities to bring the two to India for questioning. Mr. Chavan was making a statement after several members expressed serious concern over the Bomb blasts in Calcutta last night.

Earlier, members demanded that the government should firmly deal with the challenge. The leader of the opposition, Mr. L.K. Advani, said the center should now show firmness in fighting terrorism. Left Party members Mr. Saifuddin Chaudhary, CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist]; Mr. Geeta Mukherjee, CPI; and Mr. Chitta Basu, Forward Bloc said that the government should come out with a detailed statement and consult all political parties on measures to deal with the situation. They also said that there has to be a close coordination between the center and the state governments. Mr. Rabi Roy, Janata Dal said that the violence is spreading after the Ayodhya incident on the 6th of December and the government should reassure the house that it has the resource to deal with internal sabotage. Mr. Sulaiman Seth, IUML [Indian Union Muslim League] strongly condemned the bomb blasts in Bombay and Calcutta and said that the culprits should be brought to book.

Members in the Rajya Sabha today expressed their anguish and concern over the killing of innocent persons in Calcutta blasts. Raising the matter during the zero hour, the members wanted a statement from the home minister on the explosion. Some members objected that

the home minister, Mr. Chavan, is not in the house to give information about the Calcutta explosion. The minister of state for home, Mr. P.M. Sayeed, said that his colleague, Mr. Rajesh Pilot, has gone to Calcutta and a fuller statement on the explosion will be made in the house later today.

Canada Offers Help To Investigate Bombay, Calcutta Blasts

BK1703163093 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Canada has offered to help India in the investigations of the Bombay and Calcutta explosions. The visiting Canadian minister for constitutional affairs, Mr. Joe Clark, said in New Delhi today that his country is more than willing to help bring the perpetrators of these atrocities to book. Mr. Clark also held detailed discussions with the home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, on matters relating to immigration, drug trafficking, and combatting of terrorism.

Police Say Local Gangsters Staged Bombay Blasts

BK1603160593 Hong Kong AFP in English 1434 GMT 16 Mar 93

[By M.R. Narayan Swamy]

[Text] BOMBAY, March 16 (AFP)—Muslim members of Bombay's underworld carried out the bombings here last week and the blasts may have been aimed at avenging the deaths of Muslims during communal riots, a senior police officer said Tuesday.

Additional police commissioner V.N. Deshmukh said that investigators had concluded that the 11 bombings were staged by members of a criminal syndicate linked to known Bombay crime boss Dawood Ibrahim, a Muslim who lives in Dubai.

"The linkage has been conclusively established," he said. "The involvement of the locals is very much there."

Deshmukh said Muslim gangsters may have carried out Friday's bombings, which left nearly 300 people dead and 1,250 injured, to avenge the large-scale killings of Muslims by Hindu mobs during sectarian violence here in January.

"There is certainly a religious factor," he said.

Nearly 700 people died and many Muslim shops and businesses were torched during 10 days of rioting here in January sparked by the December 6 demolition of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya by Hindu extremists.

Deshmukh said police had launched a massive crackdown against the underworld following the bombings of the Bombay Stock Exchange, Air India building, luxury hotels, shopping centers, a cinema and a crowded bus and other sites. The senior police officer ruled out the involvement of Sri Lankan Tamil militants in the attacks

but said that a claim of responsibility by a Sikh separatist group, the Khalistan Commando Force, was being looked into.

Bombay police chief Amarjit Singh Samra announced Monday that police were looking for several Muslim gangsters suspected of having links to Ibrahim, who is accused of running prostitution, gambling and extortion rackets in Bombay.

A team of U.S. forensic and explosives experts arrived here meanwhile to assist Bombay police in the investigation, the PRESS TRUST OF INDIA reported. The U.S. embassy in New Delhi declined to confirm or deny the report.

In another development, the U.S. government warned Americans not to travel to New Delhi because of a potential terrorist threat in the Indian capital.

"New information available to the U.S. government suggests that there may be a heightened threat at this time of additional acts of terrorism centered in New Delhi," the U.S. State Department said in a travel advisory issued Monday.

Top New Delhi police were involved in a closed-door meeting for most of the day on Tuesday after sounding a red alert, police sources said, but there was no word on the nature of the reported threat in the Indian capital.

Police evacuated the Delhi Stock Exchange on Tuesday after an anonymous caller warned that a bomb would explode but the call turned out to be a hoax, one of many reported around the country since Friday's bombings.

Samra, the Bombay police chief, said Monday that police were searching for two known gangsters, Philoo Khan, 30, and Mangesh Pawar, 26, who are alleged to have booked the rooms at Bombay hotels where bombs later exploded. Security was stepped up at airports, rail stations and ports to prevent the two, alleged hitmen for ganglord Ibrahim, from fleeing, police said.

In New Delhi, Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's ruling Congress (I) party urged the government Tuesday to move to declare Pakistan a "terrorist state" in connection with the bombings of Bombay.

"It is obvious that there was an international conspiracy. All indications suggest involvement of (the Inter Services Intelligence, ISI) of Pakistan in the Bombay blasts," said Congress (I) spokesman V.N. Gadgil. "India should therefore make efforts to have Pakistan declared a terrorist state," he said.

Samra said meanwhile that the bombings were "a big conspiracy in which a large number of people were involved." He said the "brain" behind the explosions was "a terrorist in the north."

The Bombay police chief declined to be any more specific about the alleged master—mind beyond saying

"he's quite an important person in the criminal world who has organized such things in the north."

Samra said that two more people were arrested Tuesday in connection with the blasts, but declined to provide any details.

Police Seize Explosives in Truck in Madhya Pradesh

BK1703032893 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] In Madhya Pradesh, the police seized yesterday a truck carrying explosives in Sehore District. The superintendent of police told our Bhopal correspondent that the explosives included 44 boxes of gelatin and 12 boxes of detonators. He said three persons have been arrested in this connection and further interrogation is on.

U.S. Clarifies Position on Banning Travel to Country

BK1703092693 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] The Clinton administration has clarified that its advice to the U.S. citizens to defer temporarily their travel plans to New Delhi is only on security reasons. The State Department Spokesman, Mr. Richard Boucher said in Washington that the move was not a political nor an economic act, but only refers to the likely heightened threat at this time of terrorist activities. The spokesman also said that Washington is providing assistance to the Indian authorities in the investigations of last week's bomb blasts in Bombay.

Iran

Embassy in Rome Denies Involvement in Murder

LD1603192093 Tehran IRNA in English 1630 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] Rome, March 16, IRNA—The Iranian Embassy here on Tuesday [16 March] refuted allegations of the terrorist grouplet Monafiqin Khalq Organisation (MKO) of Iran's involvement in assassination this morning of a MKO ringleader in Italy.

In its statement, the embassy stressed "The Islamic Republic as the biggest victim of terrorism is opposed to such an act (terrorism) in any forms and for any reasons."

Terrorist actions result from the terrorist nature of MKO (better known in Iran as hypocrites) which has so far assassinated thousands of innocent Iranians, it said.

Referring to differences among MKO elements, the embassy statement said the assassination here of Mohammad Hoseyn Naqdi was part of inter-group purges being carried out by this terrorist outfit in a bid to

distract world public opinion from the International Quds [Jerusalem] Day (March 19 the last Friday of fasting Ramadhan).

Naqdi, leader of Italy-based MKO terrorists was assassinated by two unidentified gunmen in the Italian capital today morning.

'Expert' Claims Naqdi Victim of Group Infighting

LD1603191093 Tehran IRNA in English 1628 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 16, IRNA—An anti-terrorism expert here today claimed that Mohammad Hoseyn Naqdi, a prominent member of the Monafiqin Khalq Organization (MKO) fell victim to infighting and the hostility of the Mas'ud Rajavi faction of the outlaws.

The expert who talked to IRNA on telephone on condition of anonymity, said the way Naqdi was assassinated reveals that assassins were fully aware of the inter-group information.

Naqdi was gunned down by two unidentified persons in Rome early today.

The expert who has studied Naqdi's biography and watched his positions concerning the MKO, said a MKO leader called Mohsen Reza'i [name as received], had recently implied this in a speech in Germany by saying that "...it is a usual phenomenon that on the marginal layers of the organization some people go and some others come, this is not unusual".

"Naqdi was among the MKO members who thoughtfully looked at the positions of the anti-Rajavi faction, and considered the future of the MKO grouplet as dark," said the expert.

To support his remarks the expert also referred to the remarks of 'Ali Rezvani another MKO leader who had recently said in a pamphlet that "Shahsavandi, Bazgouneh, Toyserkani and other mercenaries who are active hand in hand with the Iranian regime should know that they will be punished one by one."

The three aforesaid persons were once prominent members of the terrorist outfit but have since repented and returned to the Islamic Republic of Iran before the MKO had time for revenge. The three have called for the trial of Rajavi.

Velayati Comments on Iraq, Other Current Issues

LD1703090493 Tehran IRNA in English 0646 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 17, IRNA—Foreign Minister Dr 'Ali Akbar Velayati says there are some moves for the betterment of Iran's relations with Iraq but "we can't say that we are on the eve of opening a new chapter in bilateral relations."

"Problems in the smooth flow of reciprocal relations between Tehran and Baghdad lie with Iraq and its policy," Velayati told the TEHRAN TIMES in an interview published today. "If they (the Iraqi regime) want to live with us sincerely they should behave like good neighbors," Velayati said. He said Iraq did not have a clear-cut policy in the region probably because of the situation prevailing inside that country. "On the one hand that regime says that it wants to have good relations with Iran and on the other it asks the United States to block the way of the influence of Iran in this part of the world," he added.

If Iraq wanted to have cordial relations with Iran it had to show it by action, Velayati told the paper. "It's not a question only of Iraq," he said, "The same is true for our other neighbors who by now have realized that Iran is for peace and stability in the region and wants to have friendly and cordial relations with all without interfering in the internal affairs of each other."

On relations with Saudi Arabia, Velayati said the two countries were at the stage of "confidence building" and hoped Tehran and Riyadh will patch up their differences, and not be satisfied with a slow speed in this direction. He said an Irano-Saudi summit meet could be held in future as both heads of state have expressed their intention to meet with each other. No dates have been fixed as yet, he said.

He reiterated Iran's policy on ties with Egypt and said "the further Cairo distances itself from Israel, the closer it would come to Tehran."

"It is our open policy that we are not in favor of tensions with countries with whom we have diplomatic relations and we want this same thing with Britain," Velayati, the longest surviving foreign minister said.

He reaffirmed that the religious decree issued by Imam Khomeyni against apostate Salman Rushdie "still stands and is final." The hue and cry made by Britain and other western countries on the matter were nothing but to divert the attention of their own people from internal problems, he said.

On the Abu Musa island dispute with the United Arab Emirates, Velayati said, "I should say that what occurred at the beginning of the crisis was in the interests of none." "To internationalize the issue of Abu Musa will not produce a solution but will in fact complicate it," he said. "If the people of al-Shariqah had any difficulty they could have referred to us and this could have been solved."

"The recent visit of (Iranian) Defense Minister Akbar Torkan (to UAE) [United Arab Emirates] was fruitful in this direction and we are satisfied with the talks he held there with officials of the UAE," he said.

Comments on Afghan Crisis

LD1703100493 Tehran IRNA in English 0841 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 17, IRNA—Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati believes that the tripartite effort by Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia for the solution of the Afghan problem was a positive step. But he is not optimistic that "all will go right too soon." Velayati made the remarks in an interview with the TEHRAN TIMES published today.

"You know that Afghanistan has gone through very crucial and critical stages including coup after coup which made the political situation very complicated," he said, adding that those critical sensitive years inflicted deep wounds on the political life of that "landlocked country."

"And one should not expect that these old wounds would heal so soon," he said, adding that "one also should not forget the tribal and ethnic ingredients of Afghan society which are stumbling blocks in the way of a solution to the Afghan problem and to the harvesting of fruits of the tripartite efforts in this direction."

Rival mujahideen leaders signed an agreement in the Pakistani capital, Islamabad last week and vowed that they would lay aside their differences and invest their energies in the reconstruction of their country. Since April last year (when the puppet government of Najibullah was toppled) and until the time they signed the Islamabad accord, several thousand Afghans were either killed or injured and considerable property damages were inflicted on Kabul and other cities of Afghanistan. After signing the accord in Islamabad the mujahideen leaders travelled to Saudi Arabia and later to Iran to put a final seal to the agreement with the signature of President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

"I think the Islamabad agreement provided the basic infrastructure for the mujahideen to go ahead on the road of peace and prosperity," Velayati said. Velayati said an Iranian delegation at deputy ministerial level will soon be in Kabul in order to iron out the remaining points of dispute among the mujahideen groups.

He admitted that other Muslim countries also tried to calm the situation in Afghanistan but Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia shouldered the greater responsibilities from the very beginning of the crisis. "We three had common reasons and that was why we did not want to allow the slaughter our brothers in Afghanistan," he said.

Azerbaijan's Nakhichevan Leader Arrives in Tehran

LD1603153093 Tehran IRNA in English 1513 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 16, IRNA—Nakhichevan's head of State Council Geydar Aliyev arrived in Tehran on a two-day visit and was greeted by Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati.

He said on arrival that since the autonomous republic of Nakhichevan is part of Azerbaijan Republic and due to common cultural and historical bonds and long borders with Iran, his republic was interested in expansion of relations with Tehran.

He said during his last visit he held useful talks with Iranian officials which led to signing of several agreements. He described Iran's assistance to Nakhichevan as being in line with the previous agreements and said that Iran has extended considerable financial help to the republic. Aliyev termed Russian socio-economic situation as chaotic.

Velayati welcomed expansion of relations with Nakhichevan and hoped that Aliyev's current visit would be as fruitful as the former one.

Meets With Velayati

LD1603211793 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] Mr. Geydar Aliyev, head of the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan, said at a meeting with Foreign Minister Mr. Velayati today: His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, has been a great spiritual influence on myself and the people of Nakhichevan, and we have always been grateful for his kind support in alleviating our people's problems. He also called for Iran's assistance in reconstructing the Nakhichevan Republic's industries.

For his part, remarking on the friendly relations between the two countries, Mr. Velayati stressed the Islamic Republic of Iran's support for Nakhichevan. Pointing to the Karabakh conflict, he expressed the hope that the conflict will be resolved in a just and honorable manner.

Iran-Nakhichevan Cooperation Discussed

LD1703092893 Tehran IRNA in English 0716 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 17, IRNA—Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati in a meeting with visiting Nakhichevan head of state Geydar Aliyev here Tuesday [16 March] hoped that the Karabakh issue would be solved in a just and honorable way as a result of which the tormenting blockade imposed on Nakhichevan people would be lifted. Aliyev arrived here on a two-day official visit Tuesday. He described the memorandum earlier signed between the two countries as "very significant" and said that implementation of its articles has solved many of the problems of his people. Iran's support is being warmly received by the Nakhichevani nation, he stressed.

Aliyev called for continuation and promotion of Iran-Nakhichevan cooperation and for Iran's participation in the country's industrial reconstruction. He also invited Velayati to visit Nakhichevan.

The Iranian minister said that Tehran looks upon Nakhichevan as "a very close neighbor" with excellent ties adding that Iran fully supports the autonomous republic. Expressing satisfaction over the rapid progress in bilateral ties, Velayati hoped that they will further increase in future. Referring to the existing common religious, historical and cultural backgrounds between the two nations, he hoped that Iran-Nakhichevan brotherly ties would further expand. Iran has proved to be a very close friend to Nakhichevan and Azerbaijan republic, he reiterated.

According to Velayati, the opening of Iran's consulate general in Nakhichevan proves the significance that Iran attaches to its relations with that autonomous republic.

Funds Reportedly Earmarked for Terrorism

NC1703115493 Cairo ROSE AL-YUSUF in Arabic 15 Mar 93 pp 16-17

[Report by Fayzah Sa'd]

[Excerpts] The Iranian Government has earmarked \$500 million for terrorism in the new budget. Other secret funds, which do not appear on any budget statement, will be added to this amount from Khamene'i's office allowances in his capacity as vice regency of the supreme jurisconsult.

The decision was adopted within the context of Tehran's commemoration of the 14th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution last February. More than 2,500 fundamentalist cadres in the Arab and Islamic states, as well as in the newly proclaimed Islamic republics of the former Soviet Union, were invited to the event.

Three Iranian apparatuses involved in exporting the Islamic revolution had been commissioned to send invitations on a geographical basis. These were the Martyr Foundation, led by Mohammad Hasan Rahimiyan; the Foundation for the Oppressed and Disabled, supervised by [Mohsen] Rafiqdust, former Pasdaran [Islamic Revolution Guards Corps] commander and Hashemi-Rafsanjani's son-in-law; and the Foreign Ministry's Department of Liberation Movements. [passage omitted]

The huge event was held under the slogan "A New Strategy for the Universal Revolution." Several important decisions were adopted, including the reclassification of organizations under a single command. According to a geographical division, Hizballah, Islamic Jihad, Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], and the Turkish Hizballah are now working under one command. Four Lebanese Shiite families—Tulays, Ya'ini, Qasim, and Hammadi—act as liaison among these groups. [passage omitted]

French security interrogations of Sharif Esfahani and Ahmad Taheri, accused of assassinating Kazem Rajavi—brother of Mas'ud Rajavi, leader of the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization—in Switzerland revealed

that Iranian terrorism targets Egypt, a major regional power. The Lebanese network undertakes the primary role in exporting that terrorism.

The German Government has reached similar findings through the interrogation of two Lebanese nationals, 'Abbas Rahhal and Yusuf Amin, accused of assassinating four members of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan who were opposed to the Iranian regime in Berlin. The detainees revealed very serious and sensitive information on a Palestinian-Lebanese-Turkish network that is expected to play an important role in accordance with decisions made at the Tehran meeting. The operations are scheduled to start in June to mark the anniversary of Khomeyni's death.

The meeting approved several operations targeting the United States, its territories, and its allies. These operations may involve taking American hostages and sabotaging American economic institutions all over the world. Secret codes have been developed for that purpose.

'Hundreds' Detained During Zoroastrian Festival

NC1703122993 Paris AFP in English 1146 GMT
17 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 17 (AFP) - Anti-riot police detained hundreds of youths in the Iranian capital late Tuesday [16 March] as they celebrated the ancient Zoroastrian "fire festival."

They rounded up youths setting off firecrackers or lighting fires to mark the festival, which is celebrated on the last Tuesday night before the Iranian new year on March 21.

Boys and girls dancing in the streets to the music of car radios—the only night of the year that such an occurrence takes place in Iran—were dispersed and many of them also detained.

The authorities have tried in vain since the 1979 Islamic revolution to suppress the festival, which is considered pagan but become a part of Persian culture. Last year, for the first time, the celebrations were tolerated.

For the fire festival, people set off firecrackers and jump over fires to purify themselves before the new year. Many Tehran residents chose to mark the event this year with fires in the privacy of their gardens or back yards.

The authorities apparently cracked down this time because it fell during a period of mourning for 'Ali, the founder of the Shiite branch of Islam that is predominant in Iran.

Mohajerani Affirms Support for Deportees, Intifadah

LD1703112393 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT
17 Mar 93

[Text] Vice President Mohajerani, the official in charge of the committee in support of the Islamic Revolution of

Palestine, in his reply to the message of the Palestinian deportees' spokesman, expressed his sympathy and underlined Iran's support for the intifadah. He said that the Islamic Republic of Iran will not stop short of any effort in international forums and organizations in seeking the return of the Muslim Palestinian deportees to their homeland.

Deputy Foreign Minister Condemns Bombay Bombings

LD1303155293 Tehran IRNA in English 1503 GMT
13 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 13, IRNA—Deputy Foreign Minister 'Ali Mohammad Besharati-Jahromi here today denounced as "terrorist" acts the recent bombings in Bombay.

Besharati who was speaking to new Indian Ambassador Ramisa Chander Arora termed the demolition of the Babri mosque and the Bombay bombings as measures which would bear no fruit.

At least 1,000 people were killed and wounded in 12 bomb blasts in Bombay on Friday.

Besharati said Iran supports the territorial integrity of India and is keen on expanding Tehran-New Delhi bilateral ties.

Arora in return said that India too attaches great importance to its cooperation with the developing countries, especially the Islamic republic.

The two sides also discussed the outcome of the sixth Irano-Indian Joint Economic Commission session as well as international issues of mutual interest.

Concern Expressed Over Bomb Blasts in India

LD1403145793 Tehran IRNA in English 1345 GMT
14 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 14, IRNA—The English daily 'TEHRAN TIMES' in its editorial Sunday [14 March] expressed concern over the death of innocent people in a series of bomb blasts in India.

Commenting on the last Friday explosions in Bombay which killed more than 200 people and wounded at least 1,000 others, the paper wrote: "12 blasts in the economic and trade centers of India pose this fearful question: where is India heading? Previously, following the Hindu extremists' demolition of the Babri mosque on December 5, Bombay for ten days faced violent factional clashes which left 1,200 people dead and brought on the putting on fire of hundreds of trade centers and residential units".

Over the past three years, Hinduism has suddenly grown and many of the simple minded masses have come under the control of the Hindu extremists, therefore, it is very easy for the foreign elements to have penetrated such an organization, it added.

As a result, the editorial said, "this situation not only threatens India's democratic and secular system but also poses a serious peril on the territorial integrity of India."

"The Indian leaders have no choice but to show decisiveness and bar the growth of the terrorists and those who violate the laws."

"Unfortunately, so far, Mr. Rao and his government have shown that they lack the necessary power to do so. If Mr. Rao had decisively punished those responsible for the demolition of the Babri mosque, neither the bloody events of Bombay in the days after the demolition nor those of today would have occurred," concluded the daily.

Cooperation Hoped for With Iraq in Utilizing River

LD1403140793 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1102 GMT 14 Mar 93

[Excerpts] The strategically significant port of Abadan resumed operation after 13 years. An initial credit amounting to 1.2 billion rials has been spent on the reconstruction of the port. [passage omitted]

The Islamic Republic of Iran attaches a great deal of importance to the economic progress of the southern region of the country, which suffered heavy losses during the imposed war. The inauguration of the port of Abadan plays a significant role in the creation of employment and the region's economic growth.

Our country believes that security and stability at southern borders, particularly in the Arvand River plays an important role in the economies of Iran and Iraq. It is hoped that the two countries will endeavor toward the complete utilization of the Arvand River waterway.

Afghan Governor Arrives in Tehran for Talks

LD1503145293 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1314 GMT 15 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 15, IRNA—Governor of Herat Province of Afghanistan General Haj Mohammad Esma'il Khan arrived here Sunday [14 March] night to hold talks with Iranian officials on issues of mutual interests including the Afghan refugees return to their homeland.

Speaking upon arrival, Esma'il Khan told IRNA that among other issues he would discuss reconstruction of Afghanistan, establishment of peace and tranquility in Kabul, border security in areas between Khorasan (Iran's northeastern province) and Herat, as well as campaign against drug trafficking. He praised Tehran for hosting over two million Afghan refugees and for assisting Afghanistan.

Deputy foreign minister for Asia and the Pacific 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi, also present at the airport, said Esma'il Khan was to participate in Saturday's talks of Afghan

and Pakistani leaders here but that he could not arrive on time due to a flight delay.

The Iranian official also said a tripartite committee, set up with the United Nations cooperation, would work more actively to prepare the ground for the return of the Afghan refugees. But, he said, as long as the Afghan refugees are here they will receive Iran's services.

European Countries Asked To Aid Afghanistan

LD1603200093 Tehran IRNA in English 1616 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 16, IRNA—Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi said on Tuesday [16 March] that restoration of peace and stability in Afghanistan is a prerequisite for start of that country's reconstruction.

Borujerdi, talking to Tehran-based diplomats of the European Community (EC) member states, called on European states to take serious measures in assisting Afghanistan and to contribute to its reconstruction.

Referring to a peace accord recently signed by rival Afghan mujahedin leaders in Islamabad, Borujerdi said that with regards to the United Nations chief's support for the accord, EC members are expected to back the trend of peace in Afghanistan.

Endurance of Afghan Peace Agreement Questioned

NC1403163393 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 8 Mar 93 p 15

[Editorial: "A Durable Compromise"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. The talks among the jihadi leaders of Afghanistan have culminated in a final agreement. The parties involved reached a compromise regarding present and future problems and they signed an accord.

According to the agreement, Borhanoddin Rabbani will remain president. Hekmatyar seems to have attained most of his objectives, as it was agreed that a member of his Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] will be prime minister. The members of the cabinet will be chosen and introduced within two weeks after consultations among the various groups and the president. In the next six months parliamentary elections will be held to determine the composition of the future majles of Afghanistan.

Those who wish the Afghan nation well should expect the compromise among the Afghan groups to mark the beginning of an era of peace and stability in Afghanistan and all the forces to mobilize their resources and capital for the reconstruction of war-torn Afghanistan. However, bitter experiences in the past in Afghanistan preclude any optimism in welcoming the latest accord. The mujahedin groups have signed numerous accords in the

14 years of their struggle, none of which has enjoyed a positive, effective, and durable outcome.

It is the bitter truth that Afghanistan's jehadi groups have signed many useful agreements in the past but have outdone one another in violating them in practice. If only the problems were limited to mere violations of these accords and stopped there! Instead, many Afghan groups have gone so far in their confrontation with rival groups that their enmity is greater than the hostility toward the Marxist regime and its lackeys.

It is precisely for this reason that in the course of the past year the lackeys of the Marxist regime in Kabul had the opportunity to capitalize on this deep and inherent conflict among the rival jehadi factions and infiltrated them and pitched them against one another.

Some may say that it is not expedient to recall the galling experiences of the past in such circumstances. These individuals may call on everyone to welcome the latest agreements with complete optimism. However, the interests of Afghanistan demand that the combatant Afghan nation and the jehadi forces and all those who consider the attainment of the greatness and honor of Islam in Afghanistan as their main aspiration approach the past, present, and future problems of Afghanistan with vigilance.

Would that all the jehadi groups who truly regret the events of the past year were to henceforth adopt a policy that would prevent the recurrence of such events! Would that all the jehadi leaders were to welcome the latest accords and adopt policies that could keep the latest agreements from meeting the fate of similar compromises in the past!

The Afghan people should be assured that even though they have friends and foes, they still have some friends who—with utmost concern for the present and future—warn them of the dangers and ambiguities that may presage a repetition of past events.

Today is the day for vetting the good intentions of the Afghan groups who should manifest their goodwill to establish peace and stability in Afghanistan. All of them should invest in the interests of the country and the oppressed Afghan nation instead of catering to their own personal interests.

If the goodwill of all the Afghan groups is forthcoming in crossing this stage, entry into the next stage—that is the stage of renovation and reconstruction of Afghanistan—will not be too far off. If this goodwill is lacking, however, the likelihood of past failures being repeated increases by the minute.

The consensus among the Afghan groups has always been a "compromise on paper and confrontations in the battlefield." It is expected that all will have learned a lesson from the bitter experiences of the past to a certain extent and will act responsibly to extricate Afghanistan from this tormenting crisis.

All should be vigilant to neutralize plots that could be hatched on the Afghan scene by the infiltrators and elements nurtured by foreigners. Overoptimism has always been a blight for Afghanistan that has been capitalized upon by others and is ultimately transformed into complete mistrust among the groups. Those who have been relying on foreigners have, with their naivete and misplaced optimism, brought about circumstances that have regrettably pitched them against one another.

Today Afghanistan is poised on the path of compromise, but it is feared that this "fragile compromise" may not prove very durable and the jehadi groups may once again be locked in conflict.

As far as the oppressed people of Afghanistan are concerned, they are counting the minutes to complete peace and tranquillity in Afghanistan. However, will the jehadi groups be able to consolidate the accords reached? The answer to this question will soon become apparent.

DPK Leader Sends Letter to Butrus-Ghali

*NC1703083093 (Clandestine) Voice of Iranian
Kordestan in Persian 1730 GMT 16 Mar 93*

["Text" of letter from Mostafa Hejri, secretary general of the Democratic Party of Kordestan of Iran, DPK, to UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali on 14 March 1993]

[Text] Your Excellency Butrus Butrus-Ghali, secretary general of the United Nations: At 1015 on Saturday, 13 March 1993, six Iranian military jets bombed the headquarters of our Political Bureau on Iraqi territory and martyred four people, wounded several others, and inflicted damages on our party and on several Iraqi farmers who are living near our headquarters. It should be noted that the bombed area is situated inside the 36th parallel which has been declared a no-fly zone by the United Nations.

Last summer the Islamic Republic assassinated three of our comrades in Berlin, among whom were DPK Secretary General Dr. Sadeq Sharafkandi and a member of the party's Central Committee. Three years ago, DPK Secretary General Dr. 'Abdolrahman Qasemlu and a member of our party's Central Committee were assassinated by terrorists of the Islamic Republic in Vienna.

Our sin is that we want to establish democratic rule in Iran that will ensure the national rights of the Iranian people. This is the direction toward which we are moving. The Islamic Republic's acts against our party and against all freedom-seekers in Iran trample on and violate all the norms and charters of the United Nations. Your silence on the inhuman acts by the Islamic Republic has led to the escalation of the Islamic Republic's assassination and [word indistinct] acts and grants it the opportunity to murder Iranian freedom-seekers wherever it wants to.

We expect the United Nations to take serious steps to safeguard the oppressed Iranian people, including the Kurds, against the Islamic Republic's oppressions.

[Signed] Mostafa Hejri, secretary general of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan of Iran

[Dated] 14 March 1993

West's 'Racist Policies' Decried

NC1403141593 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic in Persian 2 Mar 93 pp 1, 14

[Editorial: "The Mask of Human Rights on the Face of the Racists"]

[Excerpts] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful.

In today's turbulent world, many terms have lost their true meaning, leaving behind nothing but a meaningless slogan. "The campaign against racial discrimination" is one such example.

Racists today consider themselves to be heroes of this campaign and adopt postures of being champions of human rights. They issue statements on racism while ridiculing all measures for an effective and serious campaign against it. Yesterday was "International Anti-Apartheid Day." It would be worth our while to ask what action was taken to observe this day. What positive step was taken to pressure racists and what benefit did the victims of apartheid reap?

The answers to these questions have very disappointing responses. If we wish to answer them in one word, we would say: "Nothing!" [passage omitted]

The West is pursuing its illicit interests by resorting to racist policies. At the same time, with brazen audacity, it adopts a posture of being "a champion of human rights" and by deceit strives to prevent nations from understanding the truth and fans the flames of deceptive propaganda to divert world opinion. Does anyone not know that Britain, France, the United States, Germany, and other European countries have, in some way or the other, contributed to the consolidation of the racist Israeli regime? Does anyone not know that the catastrophe in Bosnia-Herzegovina is the result of the racism of the Serbs? Does anyone not know that the West ostensibly condemns the atrocities and catastrophe taking place in Bosnia-Herzegovina but, in fact, motivates the Serbs to continue committing these crimes?

It is the bitter truth that these savage events continue even today. The Zionists are deporting the true masters of the Islamic homeland of Palestine from their hearths and homes while the world displays its inability to return them to their homes. The Bosnian Muslims have been besieged in their own country and are being massacred from all over.

Muslim minorities in France and Germany, who have the second largest number of followers after Christianity, are being attacked by brutal racist groups. All this clearly indicate that these racist actions have the tacit and multifaceted support of these countries' police and security forces.

The "Ku Klux Klan" and all other racist groups in the United States easily attack racial minorities and continue their crimes without prosecution. Is there any reason to cite more facts or figures? Is all this molestation and political contradiction between the undeclared policy and the actual deeds justified? Will the contemporary world remain a silent spectator to these deeds?

Divulging such policies and their inherent contradictions is the first task that should be tackled, and public opinion in these countries should be mobilized against the racists. The powers of world arrogance with their levers of propaganda are trying to divert world public opinion and use the mask of human rights to protect a repulsive racist visage.

The vigilant, aware, and independent nations have to remove this deceptive mask from the face of the racists and prove to all that these false advocates of human rights are nothing more than the same malicious racists themselves.

UN Report on Human Rights Violation Rejected

LD1303150593 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1106 GMT 13 Mar 93

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] On the basis of a report by its special envoy, Galindo Pohl, the UN Human Rights Commission issued a resolution in which it expresses concern over the violation of human rights in Iran. Among those who voted for the resolution are the United States, France, and Britain, who themselves are accused of violating human rights.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has always been the victim of the the Human Rights Commission's duplicity and selective approach and is criticized because of propaganda pressure exerted by influential member countries of that organization. [passage omitted]

Many Western countries who call on other countries to observe human rights do not completely adhere to such international agreements themselves. This can be seen in reports from those countries to the UN Human Rights Commission.

The United States of America, Britain, and France, for example, have the highest level of offenders in the world. Violence, addiction, and prostitution have confronted those societies with family and social crises during which even the rights of innocent children are violated.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is principally against the discriminatory and distorted approach of the Human Rights Commission. This question should be asked: Does the 4-million strong Muslim minority in France and the 2-million strong Muslim minority in Britain have the same right to enter the parliament as a few hundred thousand-strong minority has in Iran?

The Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly announced that it sees no problem, in principle, in helping the representatives of the Human Rights Commission to prepare their reports, carry out their inspections, and understand Islamic rights and become informed of the process of trials at judicial courts, on the condition that their reports are unmotivated and free from any kind of clamor and hostile atmosphere.

Armed Opposition Steps Up Activity in Iraqi Border Areas

PM1703115093 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 15 Mar 93 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Iran Takes Security Measures in Five Districts as Armed Opposition Activity Escalates"]

[Text] Tehran, London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—The Iranian authorities have taken special security measures in five western districts following reports of increasing activity by armed opposition groups there.

According to responsible sources in Tehran, these measures cover the districts of Khuzestan, Ilam, Kerman-shah, Kordestan, and Azarbayjan-e Bakhtiari, all of which are adjacent to the Iraqi border.

The official authorities fear raids from across the border by opposition groups stationed in Iraqi territory. Some reports say preparations may be under way for the initiation of a general bombing offensive on the occasion of the start of Nauruz, the new year, on Saturday. The first bomb attack occurred last Wednesday in the oil capital of Ahvaz. Two people were killed and 22 were injured in that attack.

Another bomb exploded on Friday [12 March] in the border town of Mehran but there were no casualties.

A group of armed exiles stationed in Iraq raided the village of Koram-Tandi [as transliterated] inside the Iranian border last Saturday. A Revolutionary Guard unit was airlifted by military helicopter to the area, clashed with the group, and forced it to retreat into Iraqi territory.

According to unofficial reports, four rebels and two Revolutionary Guard members were killed in that clash.

Official sources declined to reveal the identity of the attackers but Tehran sources say that the operation was carried out by the Iranian Liberation Army, the military wing of the Mojahedin-e Khalq, which has its headquarters in Iraq.

The sources denied foreign press claims that Iranian Kurdish exiles participated in the attack. Tehran clearly believes that the various armed opposition groups will escalate their operations between now and 21 June, the date of the presidential elections.

'Special Importance' of Russian Strife Viewed

NC1503151193 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 2 Mar 93 p 12

[Commentary by Ruzbeh Bulhari: "Yeltsin—the Beginning of the End"]

[Excerpts] Following a display of power by the opponents of the Russian Government—comprised of nationalists and communists—during the ceremonies to mark "the defense of the fatherland" day, the former Red Army day, Boris Yeltsin warned the country of a possible uprising. [passage omitted]

Any upheaval in Russia is of special importance to Iran's political position in international relations because of Iran's proximity to Russia. Such an event would also result in a change in the viewpoints of other countries, which would again affect Iran.

The current Russian leaders will have the following balances in mind concerning Iran:

- Iran has the appropriate capacity to transport oil to the West.
- Iran's considerable influence in central Asia and the Caucasus can be effective in preserving peace and tranquillity in these republics. This can assure Moscow regarding these regions and enable it to tackle other regional and international issues, as well as preventing Western influence in central Asia and the Caucasus.
- A Russia that has been subjected to upheaval—which in essence will be opposed to the West—will need cooperation from Tehran and by utilizing Iran's influence among the combatant Islamic forces of the Middle East, it will be able to expand the anti-imperialist struggle, thus bringing the West face to face with the threat of losing its vital interests in the region.

On the other hand, Iran is also important to the West, for the following reasons:

- Iran is an important oil producer in the Persian Gulf region.
- It is the most populous country in the Persian Gulf region and has superior military capability, giving it a favorable position.
- Iran's location near the Strait of Hormuz and its proximity to the countries of central Asia and the Caucasus allow Iran to fan the instability in these regions and prevent Russian domination.

Thus, Iran will be in a suitable position with regard to the United States and its gains, which are based on not being taken by surprise and on combating unexpected upheavals in Russia. It will thus constitute a security belt around these countries. [passage omitted]

Iran is also an ideological country and enjoys the least U.S. trust. Its geopolitical situation is the reason for the United States to try to get close to it.

In any case, the United States will strive to formulate a regional accord among the countries of central Asia and the Caucasus, like NATO, and douse the flames of their conflicts to reduce their ties with Iran.

In this regard, one must bear in mind that on the basis of Washington's plans, Iran's membership in a security pact in the Persian Gulf would also reduce its ability to pay complete attention to the Caucasus and central Asia.

However, it behooves Iranian foreign policy officials to become aware of the importance of our country's role in future regional developments and to prepare themselves for logical participation in protecting our interests in light of the changing scenario in Russia.

Future developments in Russia should be considered positive—within the framework of the analyses regarding the south—and will ultimately be to Iran's benefit, due to the escalation of struggles against the powers of world arrogance in the region and subsequently in the world.

On the other hand, the importance of Iran's role for the West continues to increase and to prevent Iran from being close to Russia, the West will be ready to bestow all kinds of privileges on it.

In any case, Iran's foreign policy, which is based on nonaffiliation to the great powers, demands an active role for Iran rather than a passive one. The expansion of Iran's activities in central Asia and the forging of closer relations with the regional countries—Pakistan and China—can prove decisive cards worth playing in the future.

Guardian Council Approves Trade Agreement With China

LD1403191393 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 14 Mar 93

[Excerpt] At today's session of the Guardian Council, bills on trade agreements between Iran and China and between Iran and Qatar were reviewed. They were declared to conform with religious law and the Constitution. [passage omitted]

Recent Floods Blamed on Inattention to Natural Resources

LD1203175693 Tehran IRNA in English 1600 GMT 12 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 12, IRNA—Minister of Construction Jihad Gholam Reza Foruzesh today termed lack of proper plantation and inattention to natural resources among the reasons causing the recent devastating floods in many parts of the country.

Between the years 1952-82, Foruzesh said, 825 floods of varying dimensions had occurred inflicting over rls. 580 billion of damage. but, he said, the figure amounted to over rls 1,000 bn this year (started March 21, 1992) which was quite unusual.

Foruzesh who was addressing a gathering of worshipers at the Friday prayer ceremony, regretted that since 200 years ago Iran's natural resources had been subjected to plunderings as a result of foreign interventions.

He said one third of the country's forests had been destroyed over the past 50 years and deserts had started encroaching leading to elimination of plantations.

Foruzesh added that about 1.5 million tons of agricultural soil were destroyed annually, while forestation stood at 1.5m hectares.

The minister said that until 1979 there were 43,000 hectares and from 1980 to 1989 there were 97,000 hectares of forests in the country. But, he added, only over the past three years 260,000 hectares had been added to the forests.

Pakistan

Spokesman Regrets Indian Accusation on Bombay Blasts

BK1703143493 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] A Foreign Office spokesman in Islamabad today expressed deep regret over accusation emanating from certain quarters of India blaming Pakistan for Bombay blasts. The spokesman said Pakistan has condemned these acts of terrorism and the prime minister has clearly stated that all right-thinking people will condemn such wanton acts of violence. The spokesman said such baseless accusations would neither promote the cause of peace nor the efforts for normalization of relations between the two countries.

In reply to a question, the spokesman said if India so desires, Pakistan is ready to negotiate disarmament on regional level as envisaged in the prime minister's June 1991 proposal.

Sharif Sends Sympathy Message to Rao on Bombay Blasts

BK1503024693 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 15 Mar 93

[Text] Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif has expressed his sympathy and condolence to the Indian prime minister on the bomb blasts in Bombay. In a message to Narasimha Rao, he said he was deeply grieved to know about the incidents of blasts which took away many precious lives. He said that any sane person will condemn such a barbarous act.

Foreign Office Prepared To Discuss Force Cuts With India

BK1703114093 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] A Foreign Office spokesman said in Islamabad today that Pakistan would certainly be prepared to discuss mutual reduction of forces with India if there is any genuine desire from the other side. He was asked to comment on the Indian ambassador's interview suggesting consideration of mutual cuts in defense expenditure both by India and Pakistan. The spokesman pointed out that there is no formal response yet from India to Pakistan's proposal of (?June) 1991 in which he [as heard] had offered talks for arms control and disarmament in South Asia. The spokesman said while India claims that it is having larger forces keeping in view their long borders, but all Indian forces are deployed against Pakistan which is a security threat on our borders.

Paper Censures India for Kashmir Policy

BK1303094393 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 13 Mar 93 p 7

[Editorial: "Delhi in a fix"]

The resignation of Girish Saxena as Governor of occupied Kashmir symbolises Delhi's failure to deal with the uprising in the Valley. But more important, it is a mark of its growing desperation over the deteriorating situation and its search for ways to control this. On Wednesday [10 March], Girish Saxena, who became Governor some three years ago, flew into Delhi from Srinagar to submit his resignation to the government of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao. His resignation comes after weeks of speculation about his differences with the junior home minister, Rajesh Pilot. Known as a pragmatist over the issue of the Kashmiri insurrection, Pilot held a rare meeting with Kashmiri militants last month in an effort to explore a political solution. It was at that time that Governor Saxena is reported to have offered to resign over apparent differences with Pilot.

It seems now that the Pilot view has found more adherents in Delhi whose only policy so far—if it can be called that—has been to apply more and more doses of force to quell the uprising in Kashmir. Ever since Rajesh Pilot took over as junior home minister in a cabinet reshuffle

in January, he is known to have been pushing attempts to find a political solution to the insurgency.

Saxena's successor has been named as General K.V. Krishna Rao, a former Army Chief. This appointment perhaps signifies despair over Delhi's inability so far to contain the situation in Kashmir. So by appointing an ex-servicemen, the expectation probably is that he would be better equipped to direct the occupying army's military operations in the Valley. But if that is so, then it does not square with the Pilot-led efforts to find a political solution.

Meanwhile, the signs from Kashmir show more strongly than ever that nothing short of complete self-determination will be acceptable to the people of Kashmir. The uprising is not abating, while the excesses and brutality committed by Indian forces are fuelling this further, providing the movement with martyrs almost every day. Moreover, more and more voices in India are now calling on Delhi to resolve the issue through talks with Pakistan. While India has always challenged Pakistan's locus standi on an issue whose disputed nature is explicitly recognised in the Simla agreement, several Indian and Kashmir leaders are calling for direct negotiations with Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir problem. The most recent calls have come from Dr. Karan Singh, former union minister and Dr. Farooq Abdullah, former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir. Both have urged Delhi to initiate dialogue with Kashmiri mojahedin groups as well as Pakistan to arrive at a political settlement. As Karan Singh put it in a meeting addressed in Jammu: "There is nothing wrong in talking to Pakistan or anybody else to resolve the problems faced by us."

Pakistan has for years offered India talks on Kashmir and last year it even shifted its position somewhat to offer talks under the Simla Agreement. Indian obduracy and rigidity has however put paid to these offers. Only a week ago Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif reiterated Pakistan's willingness for dialogue to settle "all issues." An Indian reply to the latest Pakistani offer is awaited. It is hard to imagine that it will be any different from the past. Yet Delhi must know that postponing this in a bid to buy time is no policy. It is monumental self-deception, since time is on the side of the Kashmiri people, not Delhi. If half a million Indian troops have failed to break the will of the Kashmiri people, it takes a real flight of fancy to imagine that the future use of force will yield results that are any different.

Hekmatyar Reportedly Targeted in Khyber Bridge Explosion

BK1703105593 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 17 Mar 93 p 5

[Excerpts] Jamrud—A bridge was damaged near Ali Masjid in Khyber Agency in the early hours of Tuesday [16 March] when a bomb placed by unknown people exploded.

[Passage omitted] Worried tribals came out of their houses and some reached the site of the blast. Traffic was, however, soon restored on the busy Khyber Pass which links Pakistan with Afghanistan.

Some sources felt the bomb was planted to target Hezb-e Eslami chief Golboddin Hekmatyar, Afghanistan's prime minister-designate, who was scheduled to travel to Jalabad via Khyber Pass from Peshawar Tuesday morning to attend the first meeting of Afghan leaders inside Afghanistan after signing the peace accord.

Kanjoo Holds Talks With Libyan Foreign Minister

BK1703145093 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] The Libyan foreign minister, Mr. 'Umar Mustafa al-Muntasir, held official talks with the minister of state for foreign affairs, Mr. Mohammad Siddique Khan Kanjoo, in Islamabad. Talks covered the issues of Kashmir, Babri Masjid [mosque], Afghanistan and matters before the Security Council. The two sides also discussed bilateral matters.

'Disastrous Consequences' of Narcotics Trade Discussed

BK1303093393 Islamabad THE PAKISTAN OBSERVER in English 13 Mar 93 p 6

[Editorial: "Narcotics damaging our economy"]

[Text] It was shocking to learn that almost 80 Pakistani nationals have been beheaded in Saudi Arabia for trying to bring heroin into Saudi Arabia. Invariably these carriers of the death dealing drug are detected at the port of entry and have to face the Saudi punishment for this offence, which is death. Sometime ago a driver of a Pakistani diplomat in Saudi Arabia was apprehended for using his quarters for processing heroin. He was detected when a dead body was found in his quarters by neighbours. It transpired that the driver and his victim were engaged in heroin trade and fell out for some reason. Consequently the driver killed his partner and tried to burn his body. The result of all this is that the reputation of Pakistanis travelling abroad has never been so bad as it is now.

All goods coming from Pakistan are likewise suspect and subjected to a very strict scrutiny and search. This means long delays at the customs check posts leading to deterioration of perishable goods and delays in unloading and clearance at sea ports. The cumulative result is a significant slow-down in our exports. Our trading partners find it more profitable to start dealing with others in preference to us. Consequently our export trade suffers.

In the Middle East there was a time when Pakistani labour was welcomed and given preferential treatment, because it was found that Pakistanis were hard-working, honest, reliable workers. This position has changed radically largely because it was found that in recent times many illegal entrants were linked with the drug smugglers. Instead of confining themselves to honest labour many were found to be involved in various shady businesses. Now Middle East employers find it more convenient to import labour from other sources.

We have thus lost or are fast losing a market for our goods and also employment opportunities. Government should take serious note of the immense harm being done to our economy by the drug trade, and take effective steps to prevent our airlines and ports being used by smugglers to export heroin to places where we have export markets and where our workers are employed. Surely with our numerous agencies whose main task is to prevent any kind of trade in dangerous drugs, we could, if we had the will, put a stop to this trade within a week. We have reached a point where we either stop smuggling altogether, or face the disastrous consequences of being treated as a pariah by the world community.

Sri Lanka

Colombo on Full Alert Amid Fears of LTTE Attacks

BK1703114693 Hong Kong AFP in English 0631 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Colombo, March 17 (AFP)—Police and troops have stepped up security in the Sri Lankan capital Colombo amid reports of Tamil guerrilla infiltrations, defence sources here said Wednesday [17 March].

Security forces were placed on full alert this week following intelligence reports that several key men of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) had entered the capital, the sources said.

"The increased military presence in the city is because of the latest alert," a military official said. There had been a marked drop in the number of road blocks here in the past few weeks but intense checks resumed this week.

Security forces launched a major crackdown against suspected LTTE hideouts in the city last year after the November 16 assassination of the navy chief by a suspected LTTE suicide bomber in a high security zone of the capital.

The LTTE carried out several other attacks including bomb blasts here as security forces continued a drive against them in the island's northeast where the two million Tamil minority is concentrated.